CHILD *vs.* PARENT

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

oF
W8134c

CHILD VERSUS PARENT

Some Chapters on the Irrepressible Conflict in the Home

BY

STEPHEN S. WISE

RABBI OF THE FREE SYNAGOGUE

Author of "The Ethics of Ibn Gabirol," "How to Face Life," "Free Synagogue Pulpit," etc.

20721
20. 11. 26

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1922

All rights reserved

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

COPYRIGHT, 1922,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1922.

BROWN BROTHERS, LINOTYPERS
NEW YORK

TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER,
SABINE DE FISCHER WISE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/childversusparen00wiseuoft

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Facing the Problem	1
II.	Back of All Conflicts	11
III.	Some Parental Responsibilities Unmet	19
IV.	The Art of Parental Giving	30
V.	The Obligation of Being	41
VI.	Wars That Are Not Wars	53
VII.	Conflicts Irrepressible	62
VIII.	Conflicting Standards	69
IX.	The Democratic Regime in the Home	76
X.	Reverence Thy Son and Thy Daughter	84
XI.	The Obsession of Possession	94
XII.	Parents and Vice-Parents	104
XIII.	What of the Jewish Home?	113
XIV.	The Jewish Home Today	120
XV.	The Sovereign Graces of the Home	127

CHAPTER I

FACING THE PROBLEM

One way of averting what I have called the irrepressible conflict is to insist that, in view of the fundamental change of attitude toward the whole problem, the family is doomed. Even if the family were doomed, some time would elapse before its doom would utterly have overtaken the home. In truth, the family is not doomed quite yet, though certain views with respect to the family are,—and long ought to have been,—extinct. Canon Barnett* was nearer the truth when he declared: "Family life, it may be said, is not 'going out' any more than nationalities are going out; both are 'going on' to a higher level." To urge that the problem of parental-filial contact need not longer be considered, seeing that the family is on the verge of dissolution, is almost as simple as the proposal of the seven-year-old col-

*Toward Social Reform, p. 111.

ored boy in the children's court, in answer to the kindly inquiry of the Judge: "You have heard what your parents have to say about you. Now, what can you say for yourself?" "Mistah Judge, I'se only got dis here to say: I'd be all right if I jes had another set of parents."

For the problem persists and is bound to persist as long as the relationships of the family-home obtain. The social changes which have so markedly affected marriage have no more elided marriage than the vast changes which have come over the home portend its dissolution. It is as true as it ever was that the private home is the public hope. A nation is what its homes are. With these it rises and falls, and it can rise no higher than the level of its home-life. Marriage, said Goethe, is the origin and summit of civilization; and Saleeby* offers the wise amendment: "It would be more accurate to say 'the family' rather than marriage." Assuming that the family which is the cellular unit of civilization will, however modified, survive modern conditions, the question to be considered is what burdens can the

*Parenthood and Race Culture, p. 193.

home be made to assume which properly rest upon it, if it is to remain worth while as well as be saved?

Nothing can be more important than to seek to bring to the home some of the responsibilities with which other agencies such as school and church are today unfitly burdened. False is the charge that school and church fail to co-operate with the home. Truer is the suggestion that church and school have vainly undertaken to do that which the home must largely do. The teacher in church and school may supplement the effort of the parent but cannot and may not be asked to perform the work of parents. The school is overburdened to distraction, the church tinkers at tasks which in the nature of things must fall to parents or be left undone. And the school is attempting to become an agency for the universal relief of the home, which cannot be freed of its particular responsibilities even by the best-intentioned school or church.

Another quite obvious thesis is that conflicts arise between parents and children not during the time of the latter's infancy or early childhood but

in the days of adolescence and early adulthood. The real differences—rather than the easily quelled near-rebellions of childhood—come to pass when child and parent meet on terms and conditions which seem to indicate physical and intellectual equality or its approach. I do not say that the processes of parental guidance are to be postponed until the stage of bodily and mental equivalence has been reached but that the conflicts are not begun until what is or is imagined to be the maturity of the child raises the whole problem of self-determination. The latter is a problem not of infants and juveniles but of the mature and maturing.

It may be worth while briefly to indicate the various stages or phases of the relationship of parents and children. In the earliest period, parents are for the most part youngish and children are helpless. This period usually resolves itself into nothing more than a riot of coddling. In the next stage, parents begin to approach such maturity as they are to attain, while children are half-grown reaching ten or twelve years. This is the term of unlessened filial dependence, though

punctuated by an ever-increasing number of "don't." In the third stage parents at last attain such maturity as is to be their own,—years and maturity not being interchangeable terms,—for, despite mounting years some parents remain infantile in mind and vision and conduct. Children now touch the outermost fringe or border of maturity in this time of adolescence, and the stage of friction, whether due to refractory children or to undeflectible parents, begins. Coddling has ended, or ought to have ended, though it may persist in slightly disguised and sometimes wholly nauseous forms. Dependence for the most part is ended, save of course for that economic dependence which does not greatly alter the problem.

The conflict now arises between what might roughly be styled the parental demand of dutifulness and the equally vague and amorphous filial demand for justice—justice to the demands of a new self-affirmation, of a crescent self-reliance. And after the storm and fire of clashing, happily there supervenes a still, small period of peace and conciliation unless in the meantime par-

ents have passed, or the conflict have been followed by the disaster of cureless misunderstanding. It may be well, though futile, to remind some children that it is not really the purpose of their parents to thwart their will and to stunt their lives and that the love of parents does not at filial adolescence, despite some Freudian intimations, necessarily transform itself into bitter and implacable hostility. To such as survive, parents aging or aged and children maturing or mature, this ofttimes becomes the period most beauteous of all when children at last have ceased to make demands and are bent chiefly upon crowning the aging brows of parents with the wreath of loving-tenderness.

One further reservation it becomes needful to make. I must needs limit myself more or less to parental-filial relations as these develop in homes in which it becomes possible for parents consciously to influence the lives of their children, not such in which the whole problem of life revolves around bread-winning. I do not consider the latter type of home a free home. It is verily one of the severest indictments of the social order that

in our land as in all lands bread-winning is almost the sole calling of the vast majority of its homes. I do not maintain that all problems are resolved when this problem is ended, but the fixation respectively of parental and filial responsibilities hardly becomes possible under social-industrial conditions which deny leisure and freedom from grinding material concern to its occupants.

The miracle of high nurture of childhood is enacted in countless homes of poverty and stress, but the miracle may not be exacted. It was hard to resist a bitter smile during the days of war, when the millions were bidden to battle for their homes. Under the stress of war-conditions, some degree of sufficiency, rarely of plenty, fell to the lot of the homes of toil and poverty—the customary juxtaposition is not without interest. But now that the war is ended, the last concern of the masters of industry is to maintain the better and juster order of the war days, and the primary purpose seems to be to penalize "the over-rewarded and greedy toilers" of the war-days, selfishly bent upon extorting all the standards of decent living out of industry.

Cutting short this disgression, the direst poverty seems unable to avert the wonder of parents somehow rearing their children to all the graces of noble and selfless living. But, I repeat, this is a largesse to society on the part of its disinherited, whose high revenge takes the form of giving their best to the highest. We may, however, make certain demands upon the privileged who reward themselves with leisure and all its pleasing tokens and symbols. For these at least have the external materials of home-building. Need I make clear that the homes of too much are as gravely imperilled as the homes of too little?

Many homes survive the lack of things. Many more languish and perish because of the superabundance to stifling of things, things, things. The very rich are ever in peril of losing what once were their homes, a tragedy almost deeper than that of the many poor who have no home to lose. The law takes cognizance in most one-sided fashion of the fact that a home may endure without moral foundations but that it cannot exist without material bases. Despite attempts on the part of the State or States to avert the break-

ing up of a home solely because of the poverty of the widowed mother, it still is true that many homes are broken up on the ground of poverty and on no other ground. Saddest of all, mothers take it for granted that such break-up is unavoidable.

Only two reasons justify the State's withdrawal of a child from its parental roof,—incurable physical and mental disability in a child, whose parents are unable to give it adequate care, or moral disability on the part of parents. If the latter ground be valid, material circumstances ought no more to hold parent and child together than the absence of them ought to drive parent and child apart. A child resident on Fifth Avenue in New York may be in greater moral peril than a little waif of Five Points. Societies for the prevention of cruelty to children ought to intervene as readily when moral leprosy notoriously pervades the home of the rich as the State intervenes when children's health is neglected or their moral well-being endangered in a home of poverty. I have sometimes thought that an orphan asylum ought to be erected for the benefit of the worse than

orphaned children of some notoriously corrupt, even when not multi-divorced, heads of society. Such a protectory for the unorphaned, though not fatherless and motherless, might serve a more useful purpose than do such orphanages as, having captured a child, yield it up reluctantly even to the care of a normal home.

CHAPTER II

BACK OF ALL CONFLICTS

It may seem to be going rather far back, to be dealing with the problem *ab ovo et ab initio*, to hold as I do that much of the clashing that takes place between the two generations in the home is the outcome of an instinctive protest against the unfitness of the elders to have become parents. It is far more important to speak to parents of their duty to the unborn than to dwell on filial piety touching parents living or dead. Children have the right to ask of parents that they be well-born. Such children as are cursed and doomed to be born may not only curse the day that they were born but them that are answerable for the emergence from darkness to darkness.

Even if we did not insist upon dealing with fundamentals, children would, and they will, question the right of unfit parents to have begotten

them. A new science has arisen to command parents not only "to honor thy son and thy daughter" but so to honor life in all its sanctity and divineness as to leave a child unborn,—if they be unfit for the office of parenthood. Honor thy father and thy mother living or dead is good; but not less good is it to honor thy son and daughter, born and unborn. Some day the State,—you and I,—will step in and enforce this command and will visit its severest condemnation and even penalty upon parents, not because a child has been born to them illegitimately in a legal or technical sense, but because in a very real and terrible sense they have been guilty of mothering and fathering a child into life which is not wholly viable—that is unendowered with complete opportunity for normal living.

Some day we shall surround marriage and child-bearing with every manner of safeguard and ultimately the major findings of eugenics will be embodied into law and statute. The duty of parents to a child born to them is high, but highest of all at times may be the duty of leaving children unborn. Race suicide is bad, but an un-

guided and unlimited philoprogenitiveness may be worse. About a decade ago, it was considered radical on the part of certain representatives of the church to announce that they would not perform a marriage ceremony for a man and woman, unless these could prove themselves to be physically untainted. Later the States acted upon this suggestion and forbade certain persons entering into the marriage relation.

Some day we shall pass from what I venture to call negative and physical malgenics to positive and spiritual eugenics. The one is necessary to insure the birth of healthy and normal human animals: the latter will be adopted in the hope of making possible the birth and life of normal souls. The normal, wholesome, untainted body must go before, but it can only go before. For it is not an end to itself but means to an end, and that end the furtherance of the well-being of the immortal soul.

But in reality the eugenic responsibility of parents is a negative one and, being met, the second and major responsibility remains to be met. The former involves a decision; the latter the conduct

of a lifetime. Once upon a time and not so long ago, it might have been said that parents are not responsible for the heredity of which they are the transmitters. Today, with certain limitations, we charge parents with the responsibility of heredity which they bestow or inflict as well as with the further and continuous responsibility of environment. Whatever may be held with respect to the duty of parents as "hereditarians," there can be no doubt that it is the obligation of parents consciously to determine, as far as may be, the content of the home environment. I would go so far, and quite unjestingly, as to maintain that the least some parents can do for their children is through environmental influence to neutralize the heredity which they have inflicted upon them. Unhappily, it may be, we cannot choose our grandparents, but we can in some measure choose our grandchildren.

But environmental influence is more than a mouth-filling phrase. Parenthood and the begetting of children are not quite interchangeable terms. The continuity of parental functioning is suggested by the Hebrew origin of the term,

child, which is etymologically connected with builder, parents being not the architects of a moment but the builders of a lifetime. This means that we are consciously to determine the apparently indeterminable atmosphere of our children's life and home. That this involves care of the bodily side of child-being goes without saying, but, as we have in another chapter pointed out, this stress seems to be needless. The primary and serious responsibility of parents is bound up with the education of a child. And the first truth to be enunciated is that parents can no more leave to schools the intellectual than to priest and church the moral training of a child.

I remember to have asked a father in a mid-Western city to which it had been brought home that its schools were gravely inadequate—why he, a man of large affairs, did not set out to remedy the conditions. His answer was, "I do my duty to the schools when I pay my school taxes." This was not only wretched citizenship but worse parenthood and still worse economics. It does much to explain the failure of the American school which is over-tasked by the community and pro-

nounced a bankrupt, because it cannot accept every responsibility which the parental attitude dumps upon it. However much the school can do and does, it cannot and should not relieve the home of duties which parents have no right under any circumstances to shirk. A wise teacher in a distant city once wrote to me, having reference to the peace problem: "I personally see no hope for peace until something spiritual is substituted for the worship of the golden calf. And as a teacher I must say, if I speak honestly, that there is an increasing aversion to solitude and work both on the part of parents and pupils, due to false viewpoints of values and as to how the genuine can be acquired."

Two of the, perhaps the two, most important influences in the life of the child are dealt with in haphazard fashion. Parents later wonder where children have picked up their strange ideals and their surprising standards. Not a few of the roots of later conflict can be traced back to the earlier years, when children find themselves in schools wholly without parental co-operation and flung at amusements bound to have a disorganiz-

ing effect upon their lives. While parents must accept the co-operation of the school, the latter cannot be a substitute for the home nor the teacher a substitute for the parent. The school cannot operate in the place of the home, though it may co-operate with it. The school cannot do the work of a mother, not even the work of a father.

The same is true of parents in relation to college and university. Again I am thinking not of the youth who works and wins his way to and through college but of that type of family in which a college education for the children is as truly its use and habit as golf-playing by the father after fifty. The college-habit, I have said, is a bit of form when it is not a penalty visited upon a youth, who, after an indifferent or worse record at a preparatory school, must be forced into and through college. All of the consequences of college-education except a degree many somehow manage to avert. College education should be offered to youth as opportunity or reward, or parents will come to be shocked by the futility of it and the almost uniformly evil

sequelae thereof. And parents have the right as upon them lies the duty to insist that their sons shall not loaf and rowdyize through four years at college and, when they do acquiesce in the ways and manner and outlays of the college-loafer and the college-rounder, they must not expect a bit of parchment to convert him into an alert, ambitious, industrious youth. If they do, as they are almost certain to do, the conflict will begin.

CHAPTER III

SOME PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES UNMET

I HAVE sometimes thought that a glimpse of the want of deep and genuine concern touching the education of children is to be gotten in the rise of summer camps in great numbers during recent years. I do not deny the place or value of a camp for children and youth. I have come into first-hand contact with some admirable camps for boys and girls and, as I looked at some visiting parents, could not avoid the regret that the separation between parent and child was to be of a brief summer's duration. Two months in the year of absence from the home can hardly suffice to neutralize the effect of ten months of parental presence and contact. I quite understand that the ideal arrangement in some homes would be to send the child to camp during the summer months and to send the parents out of the home, anywhere, during the rest of the year,

an arrangement that is not quite feasible in all cases.

My query is—granted the value of the camp, how many parents have thought the problem through for themselves, a query suggested not by the inferior character of some camps, but by the celerity with which the camp-craze has swept over the country. In many camps children are sure to profit irrespective of the character of the home whence they are sent, but surely there are some camps a stay in which can but little benefit children. Now why do camps so speedily multiply, and why are children being sent to them in droves? The real reason is other than the oft-cited difficulty of placing children decently in other than summer hotels.

The instant vogue of summer camps met a parental need, the need of doing something with and for children with whom, released from school, parents did not know how to live, finding in the camp an easy way out of a harrassing difficulty. Why do parents so live that in order to have a simple, wholesome life for their children, it is necessary to send them off to the woods in so-called

camps the charm of which lies in their maximum difference from hotels and in their parentlessness? The unreasoned haste with which children flocked in multitudes to the camps is a testimony to the failure of parents to live in normal, intimate contact with their children, and a prophecy, I have no doubt, of the conflict certain to develop out of the stimulated difference in tastes between child and parents.

I, too, believe that children, especially city-reared children with all their sophistications and urbanities, should be brought nearer to the simplicities of nature during the vacation period. But why not by the side and in the company when possible of parents? The truth is that, apart from the merits and even excellence of some camps, parents are so little accustomed to living with their children that when the summer months force the child into constant contact with parents, the latter grow embarrassed by the necessity for such contact, and the camp is chosen as a convenient way out of a serious domestic problem. My complaint is not against camps but against the multiplication of them necessitated by the helplessness

of parents who face the need of sharing the life of their children. And some of these parents are the very ones who will later wonder that "our children have grown away from us."

I am often consulted by parents who express their grief at that strange bent in their children, which moves a son or daughter to seek out low types of amusement and the companionship bound up therewith. I quiz the complaining parents and learn that no attempt was ever made parentally to cultivate cleaner tastes, that the child was incessantly exposed to all the vulgarities and indecencies of the virtually uncensored motion picture theatre. Recreation is become a really serious problem in our time, immeasurably more important than it was in the youth of the now middle-aged, such as the writer, when a Punch and Judy show and a most mild and quite immobile picture or stereopticon were considered the outstanding entertainments of the year.

How many parents take their children's amusement seriously, as they take their own, and are concerned that these shall be, as they can be made, free from all that is vulgar and unclean? If the

well-to-do, who might have other recreations, are given to the motion picture, is it to be wondered at that in the poorer quarters of New York, if a child be too small to be tortured by being kept at the side of its parents throughout a motion picture performance, it may be checked in its go-cart as one would check an umbrella. There is an electric indicator on the side of the screen which flashes the check-number to inform parents when their child is in real or fancied distress.

A writer in the *Outlook,* May 19, 1915, deals with the vulgarizing of American children and particularly the vulgarizing and corrupting power of the movies. He commented editorially, as I have done elsewhere, on the extraordinary absence of parental care for the minds of children in curious contradiction to the supersedulous care of the body: "Many influences are at work to vulgarize American children, and little is done by many parents to protect the mental health of their children. Neither time nor money is spared to preserve them in vigor and strength, to protect them from contamination. Meanwhile, those minds are the prey of a great many influences, which, if

not actually evil, are vulgarizing. What is going on is not so much the corruption of young people in America as their vulgarization." Parents are not less vulgarized, but the awakening and shock come when children are grown and are found to show the effects of what was innocent amusement, of what proves to have been deeply corrupting and degrading to the spirit.

But it is not enough for parents to censor the theatres frequented by their children and when they can to debar them from attendance at disgustingly "sexy" plays. It is their business as far as they can to cultivate in their children the love of the best in letters and in the arts. It is not enough to call a halt to the pleasure-madness of our children; it is needful that their recreations be guided into wholesome and creative channels. Happily books and pictures and, though less so, music, are accessible to all, and it remains true that we needs must love the highest when we see or hear it. Intellectual companionship is a primal necessity in the home contacts. Partially because of the craze for visible and audible entertainment, we have lost the habit of reading. Why

trouble to plough for ten or twelve hours through a volume when one may look upon its contents picturized within the duration of an evening's performance at the theatre and in addition the "evil of solitariness" be avoided?

There is a real advantage in the old-time habit of reading aloud in the home. It is one conducive to community of interest and a heightened tone of home-contacts. It is far better to make dinner or library conversation revolve around worth-while books than worthless persons. It may not be easy for some parents to acquire or achieve this home habit of reading aloud but it is of the highest importance that children be enabled to respect their parents as thinking and cultivated persons if these they can become. One cannot help regretting that reading aloud is becoming a lost art. One hardly knows how badly reading aloud can be done and how wretchedly it is for the most part taught until one asks one's children to read aloud.

The choice and the art of reading can best be stimulated and guided within the intimacy of the home. It may, as I have said, be difficult for parents, especially fathers, to accustom themselves to

the practice of reading aloud. It may seem sternly and cruelly taskful to read to and with one's children when it is so much pleasanter to exercise one's mind at bridge whist with contemporaries or to yield to the pleasurable anodyne of the "movies." And yet I do not know of a truer service that parents can render children than to foster a taste for worth-while books, for the best that has been said and sung, if one may so paraphrase, so that these may know and love the great things in prose and poetry alike. It is never too late to begin the habit of reading any more than adults ever find it too late to learn to dance or to play bridge.

Alice Freeman Palmer has put it*: "You will want your daughter to feel that you were a student, too, when she becomes one, and that the learning is never done as long as we are in God's wonderful world." What a difference it will make when all mothers have such relations with their children beside the life of love. When I say that it is for you to live with your children, I do not mean that you are to go to the theatre with

*Life of Alice Freeman Palmer, p. 68.

them daily or thrice weekly, for that is merely sharing pastimes with them. I say live with them, not merely join them in their amusements. Not only is reading good and needful but the right kind of reading. I sometimes wonder as I look upon cultivated persons handing their adolescent children sheaves of magazines, cheap, vulgar, nasty. We cannot expect that our children can for years feed upon the trivial and ephemeral and then give themselves to things big and worthwhile.

In one of his stimulating volumes,* Frederic Harrison suggests that men who are most observant as to the friends they make or the conversation they share are carelessness itself as to the books to which they entrust themselves and the printed language with which they saturate their minds. Are not parents often carelessness itself with respect to the books to which even very young children are suffered to entrust themselves? A book's not a book! Some books are vacant, some are deadening, some are pestilential. Wisely to help children to the right choice of

*Choice of Books, p. 8.

books, remembering that reading is to be of widest range and that in reading there are innumerable aptitudes, is to render one of the most important of services to a child.

The editor of a woman's magazine recently pointed out that in one year nine thousand eight hundred and forty-six girls wrote to her about beauty problems, and seventeen hundred and seventy-six asked advice with respect to other problems, "the throbbing, vital questions that beset the social and business life of the modern girl." Out of what kind of homes have come these young women, whose quest is of complexion-wafers? The figures of the magazine editor are above all things a *testimonium paupertatis,* intellectual and spiritual, to multitudes of American homes. What kind of mothers will these young women make? Do they dream of rearing fine sons and noble daughters, or will they be satisfied to become child-bearers at best rather than builders of men and women? But there is something more, and it is more closely related to our particular problem. It is from the empty, poor, however rich, homes that bitter protest and heart-

breaking revolt will emerge. For some children are bound in the end to despise the cramping intellectual and moral poverty of their childhood homes,—whence conflict takes its rise.

CHAPTER IV

THE ART OF PARENTAL GIVING

PARENTS must be made to see that the really irrepressible conflicts are not begun when children are fourteen, sixteen and eighteen but rather four, six, eight; in other words, are ascribable to causes long anterior to the occasions which disclose their unavoidableness. Thus parents may find themselves in collision with maturing children over the utterly sordid and gleamless character of their lives, or, what is not less grave in its consequences, their "visionary and impractical ways, so different from our well-tried *modus vivendi.*" It is quite safe to predict the rise of conflict of one character or another when parents are unmindful of the higher responsibilities of their vocation, the responsibility of making clear to children the reality of moral and spiritual values.

The supreme parental responsibility is to give or to help children to achieve for themselves those

standards by which alone men truly live, to give to children the impulse that shall reveal not what they may live by but what they ought to live for. The one potent way to avoid future conflict is so to make for, not point to, a goal that children shall not become mere money-grubbers or perpetuators of ancient prejudices or maintainers of false values or lawless upholders of the law.

Parents would do well to have in mind that the most just and terrible of reproaches are often left unspoken. I am thinking of a youth who had inherited a very large fortune. Happening to point out to him to what uses his means might be put, this youth replied: "My parents never ceased to tell me what not to do, but they never told me what it is that I ought to do. There are no *oughts* in my life which I have gotten from my father. I have learned what I ought not to do and I suppose that I know that." This was the young heir's revolt and, if his word be true, wholly just revolt against the spirit of those parents who seem to imagine it to be enough if they teach their children such fundamentals as the perils of violating statutory law, the inexpediency

of coming into conflict with those ordinances which it is the part of convention never to violate.

In one word, it is not enough to forbid and interdict. Obedience to *don'ts*, however multitudinous, is not even the beginning of morality though it lead to a certain degree of personal security. Forbidding one's children to steal may keep them out of jail, but that is hardly the highest end of life. More must be given them, such affirmations of faith and life as make for high ideals, for true standards, for real values. I have heard parents, lamenting over a child's misconduct, offer the following in self-exculpation: "I never did or said anything that was wrong in the presence of my children," it being forgotten that children may be present unseen, that they may overhear the unuttered. But, one is tempted to ask, Did you by any chance or of design say or do aught in the presence of your child that was affirmatively and persuasively right?

I can never forget a scene I witnessed many years ago. Shortly after the passing of his father, a son entered the death chamber, shook his fist in the face of his dead father and ex-

claimed with tearless and yet heartbreaking grief: "You are responsible for the ruin of my life." Later I learned that the father was a mere accumulator of money who had believed every paternal duty to have been fulfilled because he gave and planned to bequeath possessions to his children. Multitudes of parents there are who during their lifetime should be made conscious of the lives they are suffering to go to wreck, theirs the major responsibility. Happily for some parents, most children who survey the ruin of their lives fail to fix the responsibility where it properly belongs,—in parental neglect of the obligation to bring to children moral stimulus and spiritual guidance.

But the important thing for parents is not to guard their speech lest children overhear them but to guard their souls that children be free to see all. If Emerson was right with respect to a man's character uttering itself in every word he speaks, this is truest of all within the microcosm of the home, wherein children are relentlessly attentive to parental speech and silence alike, pitiless assessors of omission as well as commission.

What parents are, not what they would have themselves imagined to be by children, shines through every word and act, however scrupulous be parental vigilance over speech and conduct. It may be very important for parents to be watchful of their tongues as they are rather frequently urged to be. But it is rather more imperative to be watchful over their lives. We are tempted to forget that parental duties are positive as well as negative, that it is not enough for parents not to hurt a child, not to do injury to his moral and spiritual well-being. For of all beings parents must, paraphrasing the word of the German poet, be aggressively and resistlessly good, pervasively beneficent, throughout their contact with a child.

It is a problem whether it be more necessary to counsel children to honor parents or to bid parents be deserving as far as they may be of the honor of children. Years ago a great teacher of the nation pleaded as men commonly plead for reverence and honor on the part of children toward parents. But in truth we have no right to plead for reverence filial unless to that plea there be added solemn entreaty to the elders to make it

possible for the young to do them reverence and honor. When we, the elders of this day, bemoan the want of unity between our children and ourselves, let us not be so sure of our children's unworthiness but rather ask ourselves whether we are worthy of that which our parents enjoyed at our hands, the reverence and honor which must needs underlie unity in the home.

Honor, in a word, must lie in the daily living of parents ere they may await it at the hands of children. The father, who is nothing more than a cash register or coupon-scissors, is undeserving of honor from children, however many and goodly be his gifts to them. And the mother, whose life is given to the trivialities and inanities of every season's mandate, merits not her children's reverence despite all Biblical injunction. Children cannot be expected to do more than outward and perfunctory obeisance to fathers who care solely for the things of this world, success however achieved, money however gained and used, power whatever its roots and purposes, nor do honor to mothers whose passion is for the lesser and the least things of life.

I remember to have estranged a dear friend by urging in the pulpit that, unless parents strive as earnestly to merit honor as children should seek to yield it, they will not have it nor yet have been deserving of it. Let us for a moment get a nearer glimpse of how the matter works out from day to day. How can a mother whose life is spent in pursuit of the worthless expect reverence, though the time may come when she will yearn for it and rue her failure to have won it? The disease of incessant card-playing has laid low multitudes of wives and mothers, that card-gambling which has been described by former President Eliot as an extraordinarily unintelligent form of pleasurable excitement.

There was a time when, in the speech of the Apocryphal teacher of wisdom men strove for the prizes that were undefiled. But the prizes of the card table are not only defiled but defiling. They fill the lives of women not a few with mentally hurtful and morally enervating excitement. The substitution of the delirium of the gaming table for the durable satisfactions of life that come from worth-while intellectual pursuits is

ever a disaster. What manner of children are to be reared by a generation of bridge-experts, of women half-crazed with the pleasures of the card-table, to whom no prize of life is as precious as the temptation of bridge-whist. I recently heard the recital of a bit of conversation between parent and child: "Mother, is card playing terribly important?" "Why do you ask?" "Well, I went to see my aunt and she was playing cards with three friends, and, when grandmother came into the room, no one rose to meet her. So I thought that the game must be awfully important and the prizes very fine or they would have arisen when grandma entered, wouldn't they?"

Even if there were no fear of later conflict, it would still be the duty of parents to give themselves to children, that is to have something to give, to make something of themselves that their gift be worth while. And for the giving of self there can be no substitute though one may reinforce oneself in many ways. Parents cannot give themselves to children vicariously. A young woman, mother of a little one which I had expected to find with her, calmly answered my inquiry

touching the child, "A child's place is with its nurse." One begins to understand the tale of the little girl who declared that when she was grown she wished to be a nurse so that she might be with her children. There may be and are times when a child's place is with its nurse if the household be burdened with one, but to lay it down as a general rule that a child's place is always apart from its mother and by the side of its nurse is to disclose the manner of maternal neglect in the homes of many well-circumstanced folk. I have said before that Lincoln is to be congratulated rather than commiserated with upon the fact that he had little schooling and no nurses, seeing that in the place of schools, teachers, nurses, governesses, he had a mother and the immediacy of her unvicarious care.

Unless parental-filial contact be direct rather than intermediate, parents cannot help a child to be as well as to have and to do, to live as well as to earn a livelihood. Parents can give a child little or nothing until they learn that a child is more than a body or intellect, a body to be fed and clothed, a mind to be furnished and trained.

When parents come to remember that a child is, not has, a soul to be developed, they will cease to stuff their children's bodies and cram their minds while starving their souls. How often, alas, do parents pamper their children in their lower nature while pauperizing their higher nature, because of their failure to see that not alone were they co-authors of a child-body but that they are to be the continuing re-makers of a child's mind and spirit.

Are there quite enough parents like the father of a friend into whose young hands at leave-taking from home his father placed a Bible and a copy of the poems of Burns with the parting word, —Love and cling to both, but if you must give up the Bible cling to Burns. But verily we can give nothing more to our children than clothes and food and money until we remember to make something of ourselves. It is not easy for the stream of domestic influence to rise higher than the parental level. Time and again I have heard a father exclaim: "I am going to leave my boy so well off that he won't have to shoulder the burdens which all but crushed me." Less often

have I seen a father so rear his son that he revealed his inmost purpose to be the fostering of his son's nobleness. Are there as many parents who would have their children finely serviceable as highly successful?

CHAPTER V

THE OBLIGATION OF BEING

BUT the primary duty of parents is to learn and to teach that happiness is not the supreme end of life and to dare to live it. We are so bent upon giving to our children that we forget to ask aught of them. We seem to be unmindful of what the wisest teacher of our generation has called the danger of luxury in the lives of our children. Those parents who in largest measure have learned to do without seem to think that they must overwhelm their children with things. How many parents are equal to the wisdom of the heroic Belgian mother who would not permit her children to leave Belgium in the hour of its deepest stress and suffering, saying: "Yes, we intended to take our children to England for safety but when we remembered that in the future they might hold important positions in our country and perhaps be influential in future leadership,

we did not want them to come to this work ignorant of what our people have undergone and suffered during this terrible war. They would not have known because they would have spent all the period of the war in pleasant living in England. When we thought of this, we felt with sinking hearts that we owed it to them and their country to keep them here, though we knew and know now that there is great danger." Did not this Belgian mother serve her children infinitely better than do those parents who imagine that they must deny their children nothing save the possibility of discomfort and want?

Edward Everett Hale tells a story which clearly shows what Emerson thought best for a young man and wherein he conceived the responsibility of parents to lie. I congratulated him as I congratulated myself on the success of our young friend, and he said: "Yes, I did not know he was so fine a fellow. And now, if something will fall out amiss, if he should be unpopular with his class, or if he should fail in business, or if some other misfortune can befall him, all will be

well." He himself put it, "Good is a good doctor, but bad is sometimes a better."

With one further evil effect, perhaps the worst, of the habitude of ceaseless parental giving, I have dealt elsewhere. It fosters more than all else the parental sense of possession. Have I not given my children everything?—asks a hyper-wasteful father or a super-bounteous mother. Yes, it might be answered, you have given them *everything* and that is all you have given them. Giving a child things without number is no guarantee of peace or beauty in the parental-filial relation. Giving, giving, eternal giving is bound to narcotize into sodden self-satisfaction, or at last to rouse to protest an awakening soul. If, Mr. Successful or Madam Prosperous, you think that you are satisfying your children because you are giving them an abundance of things, you may be destined some day to suffer a sorry awakening. Remember that too many things kill a home more surely than too few. Children may ask and ought to ask more of parents than things, and, far from being satisfied with things, they ought to demand of parents that these minimize things and mag-

nify that of life which is unconditioned by things. To magnify the home is not to furnish it richly but to give it noble content.

Over-stressing the physical side of the life of children and under-emphasizing the spiritual side of their life leads inevitably to certain results. Some years ago, I knew a family in which both parents died within a brief period. There was some perfunctory grief, though in each case the funeral was one of the new-fashioned kind, marked alike by tearlessness and the use of motor-cars. The interesting thing, as I looked upon these comfortable, unworried, immobile children, was that probably it had been the dream of the parents for a lifetime to make their children comfortable and happy. Well, the parents had wonderfully succeeded, had so succeeded in the matter of making their children comfortable that not even the death of parents in swift succession could shake them out of their deep-rooted comfortableness even for a moment. Within a few weeks of the passing of the mother, I met the son and heir—heir rather than son—at an amateur baseball game in which he was one of the

vociferous and gleesome participants, with a cigar perched in his mouth at that angle which is, I believe, considered good form at a baseball game.

As I surveyed that sorry specimen of filial impiety, apparently without reverence for his parents or respect for himself, I was moved to ask myself where lies the fault, whose the ultimate responsibility? True enough, the children of those parents were rather empty-headed and superficial beings, but it was the parents who were primarily at fault. The mother was a blameless rather than a good woman, and the father was an unseeing, soulless money-grubber with but one aim in life—namely, to multiply his children's rather than his own comforts, and to enable them to indulge in every manner of luxury. These gave their children things and only things, and still there was something touching in the devotion of the parents, however poor and mistaken its objects. But there was something repulsive in the indifference of the children to the parents who had lived for naught else than their well-being, however mistakenly conceived.

Parents who give their children only things must face the fact that they make themselves quite dispensable, seeing that they are not things. For things and the wherewithal to secure them are alone indispensable according to the parental standards. The ultimate responsibility? Any possibility of change involves the re-education of parents. Parents must learn long before parenthood what are the values in life for which it is worth while to toil and to contend. The root of the matter goes very deep in conformity to the hint of Oliver Wendell Holmes with respect to the time at which a child's education is to be begun.

Some years past, I came upon a ludicrous illustration of the maximum care devoted to the physical nature and the minimum devoted to the moral and spiritual nurture of child-life. I heard a very well-circumstanced mother declare: "I never permit my child to have a crumb of food handed it by its governess which has not previously been tasted by me." Quite innocently I asked: "Where is the little gentleman?" The answer was: "Napoleon—I call him that because his

name was Caesar—is at the 'movies' this afternoon." Upon further inquiry, I learned that the mother did not know the name and nature of the play upon which her son was looking, and that in order to keep him out of mischief he was sent every afternoon to the motion picture theatres. Here was the good mother tasting every mouthful fed to the heir-apparent lest harm befall him, and, yet, he was spending an hour or more daily in attendance at a motion-picture theatre where poison rather than food might be and probably was fed to the child's mind. But no hesitation and no fear were felt on that score. Underlying the one concern and the other unconcern is a crude materialism which assumes that the avenue of access to a child's well-being is feeding but that the mind, howsoever fed and impoisoned, even of a little child, could somehow be trusted to take care of itself.

There are certain things which we deny to our children partly because we have them not, and yet again because we are not often conscious of the need of them in the life of the child. I place first spiritual-mindedness; second, the sense of

humility, and third, the art of service. These three graces must come again into the life of our children from the life of their parents and they can hardly come in any other way. If they come not, it will be an unutterable loss from every point of view, remembering the word of a distinguished university president, "the end of the home is the enlargement and enrichment of personality, the performance of the duty owed to general society in making contributions for its betterment."

I address myself particularly to Jewish parents when I say to them that it is a terrible blunder to ignore the spiritual responsibility which rests upon them. A Christian child is almost invariably touched by the circumambient spiritual culture but the Jewish child is in the midst of a non-Jewish culture and almost untouched by spiritual influences. The home gives little, the Jewish religious school gives no more than a fragmentary education in the things of Jewish history instead of exercising a characteristic spiritual influence. And, as for the Synagogue, it is the part of kindness or of guilt to be silent touching

its hardly sufficing influence in American Israel in the creation of a distinctive spiritual atmosphere or the enhancement of definite spiritual values.

With respect to the spirit of humility, I happened not long ago to confer with two young men, one of whom is about to enter into the ministry. When asked quite conventionally what it was that had moved him to think of himself as especially fitted for the ministry, his answer was: "I feel that I am a born leader of men." On the other hand, I asked a young graduate of an American university who was about to leave for Europe what was his life's purpose, and he answered: "To serve in the foreign mission field." Is it not true that the youth who felt that he was a born leader and sought a field in which he could exercise the qualities of leadership lacked spirituality, was wholly without humility, evidently did not have the faintest understanding of the possibilities of service, and the other revealed the possession of spiritual-mindedness, of humility and finally the spirit of service.

There is no more serious indictment to be

framed against the family than that it does little and often nothing to foster the social spirit. The home is not often enough a school of applied social ethics, and the home that is not is likely to witness such conflict as arises out of revolt against the smugly self-centered and unsocialized home on the part of those sons and daughters who have caught a gleam of the social life. If we had or could share with our children the spirit of service, would not great numbers of young people throughout the land rise up, eager for service to Israel in the midst of its terrible needs at home and abroad? Few were the well-circumstanced youth in the course of the war, who gave themselves to service through agencies classed as non-military, and fewer still such as volunteered for service as relief workers in East-European lands at the close of the war—again among the well-to-do. This is very largely a matter of upbringing, of the ideals implanted by parents and teachers. What is your son's ideal of living? Is it to serve or to be served? Do you try hard enough to get out of your son's head the notion that being served by butler and valet and chauf-

feur is the greatest thing in the world? The greatest thing in the world is not being served but serving, to be least served and most serviceable.

As Tolstoy put it, I believe shortly before his death, woman's bearing and nursing and raising children will be useful to humanity only when she raises up children not merely to seek pleasure but to be truly the servants of mankind. The ultimate question underlying every other is, what are you giving to the souls of your children? And the answer is,—what you are. "In my dealing with my child, my Latin and Greek, my accomplishments and my money, stead me nothing. They are all lost on him: but as much soul as I have avails. If I am merely willful, he gives me a Roland for an Oliver, sets his will against mine, one for one, and leaves me, if I please, the degradation of beating him by my superiority of strength. But if I renounce my will and act for the soul, setting that up as umpire between us two, out of his young eyes looks the same soul; he reveres and loves with me." *

Thus pleads Emerson in the name of the child's

*Emerson, "The Oversoul."

potential oversoul. Not long ago, I made an attempt to interest a young woman of a well-known family in social service. She shuddered as if some verminous thing had been held up to her gaze. "Not for me that kind of thing." You must teach your children the methods and the practice of selfless service. If you do not, well, your children may rise up against you or fall to your own level, or, worst of all, awaken and discover what you are.

CHAPTER VI

WARS THAT ARE NOT WARS

EVERY difference between parent and child is somehow assumed to be rooted in and ascribable to the inherent perversities of the parental-filial relation. When scrutinized, these will often be found to be wholly unrelated thereto. Ever are parents and children ready to take it for granted that their clashing arises out of the relation between them when in truth, viewed dispassionately and from the vantage-ground of remoteness, parent and child are not pitted against each other at all. They are persons whose conflict has not the remotest bearing upon the relation that obtains between them. Would not much heartache be avoided, if parents and children clearly understood that the grounds of difference between themselves, however serious and far-reaching these sometimes become, are not related to or connected with the special relation that holds them together?

Thus the irritations of propinquity may not be less irritating when seen to arise out of the fact of physical contact rather than from the circumstance of intellectual antagonism or moral repulsion, but it is well to know that such irritations are not the skirmishes of life-long domestic war. I say "irritations of propinquity," for, excepting among the angels, the status of propinquity cannot be permanently maintained without at least semi-occasional irritation. Professor R. B. Perry,* dealing with domestic superstitions, declares, in reference to scolding: "The family circle provides perpetual, inescapable, intimate and unseasonable human contacts. . . . Individuals of the same species are brought together in every permutation and combination of conflicting interests and incompatible moods. . . . The intimacy and close propinquity of the domestic drama exaggerates all its values, both positive and negative."

Not only does the unavoidable persistence of physical contacts account, however unprofoundly, for occasional differences in the home, but an-

*Atlantic Monthly, August, 1921, p. 221.

other and parallel circumstance ought never to be lost sight of. There are two samenesses in the home, the sameness of blood and the sameness of contacts. Putting it differently, the oneness of environment for all the tenants of a home continues and sometimes intensifies the strain in either sense of blood-oneness. This may sound playful to those who have never bethought themselves touching the enormous difficulties that arise in the home insofar as some parents, having inflicted a certain heredity upon their offspring, are free to burden these filial victims with an environment escape from which might alone enable them to neutralize or palliate the evil of their heritage. I have in an earlier passage asked the query whether filial revolt is not the unconscious protest of children against the authors or transmitters of hereditary defect or taint.

Let me name two types or kinds of what are held to be conflicts between parents and children, which are not conflicts in any real sense of the term; first, intellectual differences and, second, the inevitable but impersonal antagonism of the two viewpoints or attitudes which front each other in

the persons of parent and child. As for purely intellectual differences, it is well to have in mind the world's current and suggestive use of the term "difference of opinion"—Carlyle saying of his talk with Sterling: "Except in opinion not disagreeing"—as if that in itself were quite naturally the precursor of strife and conflict. If difference of opinion oft deepen into conflict, is it not because in the home as in the world without we have not mastered the high art of patiently hearing another opinion? Graham Wallas* would urge: "A code of manners which combined tolerance and teachability in receiving the ideas of others, with frankness and, if necessary courageous persistence in introducing one's own ideas. . . . Whether we desire that our educational system should be based on and should itself create a general idea of our nation as consisting of identical human beings or of indifferent human beings" is the problem with which Wallas† faces us.

In the world without men may flee from one

*Our Social Heritage, p. 60.

†*Idem*, p. 95.

another but the walls of the home are more narrow. And within the home-walls, for reasons to be set forth, the merest differences of opinion, however honestly conceived and earnestly held, may be viewed as pride of ancient opinion on the one hand and forwardness of youthful heresy on the other. Parents are no more to be regarded as intolerably tyrannical because of persistence in definite opinions than children are to be viewed as totally depraved or curelessly dogmatic because of unrelinquishing adherence to certain viewpoints. I am naturally thinking of normal parents, if normal they be, who would rather be right than prevail, not of such parents as imagine that they must never yield even an opinion, nor yet of children surly and snarling who do not know the difference between vulgar self-insistence and high self-reverence. For the father a special problem arises out of the truth that the mother presides over the home as far as children are concerned and as long as they remain children, and he steps in to "rule" ordinarily after having failed through non-contacts to have established a relationship with children. This is the more regret-

table because often it becomes almost the most important business of a father, through studied or feigned neglect, to neutralize the over-zealous attention of a mother, such attention as makes straight for over-conventionalization.

To regard differences of opinion as no more than differences of opinion will always be impossible to parents and children alike until these have learned how to lift these things to and keep them on an impersonal level. And of one further truth, previously hinted at, parents and children must become mindful,—that what, viewed superficially and personally, is their clashing, is nothing more than the wisdoms of the past meeting with the hopes of the future—past and future embodied in declining parent and nascent child.

Because of their fuller years and the circumstance of protective parenthood, parents are conservators, maintainers, perpetuators. Because of their uninstructed years and freedom from responsibility, children often become radical, uprooters and destroyers at the imperious behest of the future. These impersonal clashings of past and future can be kept on an impersonal

basis, provided parents can bring themselves to see that things are not right merely because they have been and that things are not wrong solely because they have not been before.

Perhaps at this point, though parents have experience to guide them and children only hopes to lead them, it is for parents to exercise the larger patience with hope's recruits, even though these find light and beauty alone in the rose tints of the future's dawn. Felix Adler has wisely said: "A main cause is the presumption in favor of the latest as the best, the newest as the truest. . . . The passion for the recent reacts on the respect or the want of respect that is shown to the older generation. . . . Now if one group of persons pulls in one direction and another group pulls in exactly the opposite direction, there is strain; and if the younger generation pulls with all its might in the direction of changing things, and if the older generation leans back as far as it can and stands for keeping things as they are, then there is bound to be a tremendous tension."

It may be true, as has lately been suggested by the same wise teacher, that the children of our

time are in protest against parents, because these are the authors and agents of the sadly blundering world by them inherited. Is it not also true and by children to be had in mind that parents are fearful of the ruthless urge and, as it seems, relentless drive of the generation to be, which become articulate in the impatiences of youth? Dealing with the difference that arises out of the fact of parents facing pastward and children futureward, Professor Perry declares*: "The domestic adult is in a sort of backwash. He is looking toward the past, while the children are thinking the thoughts and speaking the language of tomorrow. They are in closer touch with reality, and cannot fail, however indulgent, to feel that their parents are antiquated. . . . The children's end of the family is its budding, forward-looking end: the adult's end is, at best, its root. There is a profound law of life by which buds and roots grow in opposite direction."

It were well for parents and in children to remember that past and future meet in the contacts of their common present, and that these conflict-

**Idem,* p. 224.

provoking contacts are due neither to parental waywardness nor to filial wilfulness. These are not unlike the seething waters of Hell Gate, the tidal waters of river and sound, meeting and clashing, and out of their meeting growing the eddies and whirlpools which have suggested the name Hell Gate bears. Through these whirling waters there runs a channel of safety, the security of the passerby depending upon the unresting vigilance of the navigator. The whirl of the waters is not less wild because the meeting is the meeting of two related bodies, two arms of the self-same sea.

CHAPTER VII

CONFLICTS IRREPRESSIBLE

If it be true, as true it is, that many of the so-called wars are not wars at all, there are on the other hand conflicts arising between parents and children which cannot be averted, conflicts the consequences of which must be frankly faced. To one of such conflicts we have already alluded, —that which grows out of impatience with what Emerson calls "otherness." But this, while not grave in origin, may and ofttimes does develop into decisive and divisive difference. "Difference of opinion" need not mar the peace of the parental-filial relation, unless parents or children or both are bent upon achieving sameness, even identity of opinion and judgment. It is here that parents and children require to be shown that sameness is not oneness, that, as has often been urged, uniformity is a shoddy substitute for unity, and that it is the cheapest of personal chauvinisms

to insist upon undeviating likeness of opinion among the members of one's household. For, when this end is reached, intellectual impoverishment and sterility, bad enough in themselves in the absence of mental stimulus and enrichment, are sure to breed dissension.

An explicable but none the less inexcusable passion on the part of parents or children for sameness—a passion bred of intolerance and unwillingness to suffer one's judgment to be searched—is fatally provocative of conflict and clashing. Let parents seek to bring their judgments to children but any attempt at intellectual coercion is a species of enslavement. It may be good to persuade another of the validity of one's judgments, but such persuasion on the part of parents should be most reluctant lest children feel compelled to adopt untested parental opinion, and the docility of filial agreement finally result in intellectual dishonesty or aridity. Than this nothing could be more ungenerous, utilizing the intimacies of the home and the parental vantage-ground in the interest of enforcement of one's own viewpoints. If I had a son, who, every time he opened his

mouth, should say, "Father, you are right," "Quite so, pater," "Daddy, I am with you," I should be tempted to despise him. I would have my son stand on his feet, not mine, nor any chance teacher's or boy comrade's, or favorite author's, but his own, and see with his own eyes and hear with his own ears, nerving me with occasional dissent rather than unnerving me with ceaseless assent.

Children are equally unjustified in attempting to compel parental adoption of filial views, but for many reasons it is much easier for parents to withstand filial coercion than the reverse, and up to this time the latter coercion has been rather rarer than the former. "The idea of the unity of two lives for the sake of achieving through their unsunderable union the unity of the children's lives with their own," citing the fine word of Felix Adler, is a very different thing, however, from lowering the high standards of voluntary unity to the level of compulsory uniformity.

Another cause of clashing may be briefly dealt with, for it is not really clashing that it evokes. They alone can clash who are near to one an-

other, and I am thinking of an unbridgeable remoteness that widens ever more once it obtains between parents and children. Not clash but chasm, when parents and children find not so much that their ideals are so pitted against one another as to occlude the hope of harmonious adjustment, as that in the absence of ideals on one side or the other there has come about an unbridgeable gap. Nothing quite so tragic in the home as the two emptinesses or aridities side by side, with all the poor, mean, morally sordid consequences that are bound to ensue! And the tragedy of inward separation or alienation is heightened rather than lessened by the circumstance that the bond of physical contact persists for the most part unchanged.

Really serious clashing often grows out of the question of callings and the filial choice thereof. It is quite comprehensible that parents should find it difficult not to intervene when children, without giving proper and adequate thought, are about to choose a calling unfitting in itself or one to which they are unadapted. But here we deal with a variant of the insistence that parental ex-

perience shall avert filial mischance or hurt. And here I must again insist that children have just the same right to make mistakes that we have exercised. They may not make quite as many as we made. It does not seem possible that they could. But, in any event, they have the right to make for that wisdom which comes of living amid toil and weariness and agony and all the never wholly hopeless blundering of life.

Upon parents may lie the duty to offer guidance, but compulsion is always unavailing and when availing leaves embitterment behind. It is woeful to watch a child mar its life but forcible intervention rarely serves to avert the calamity. One is tempted to counsel parents to consider thrice before they urge a particular calling upon a child. I have seen some young and promising lives wrecked by parental insistence that one or another calling be adopted. That a father is in a calling or occupation is a quite insufficient reason for a son being constrained to make it his own. A man or woman in the last analysis has the right of choice in the matter of calling, and parents have no more right to choose a calling

than to choose a wife or husband for a son or daughter.

A most fertile cause of conflict is at hand in the normal determination of parents to transmit the faith of the fathers to the children. The conflict is often embittered after the fashion of religious controversy, when parents are inflexibly loyal to their faith, passionately keen to share their precious heritage with the children, while children grow increasingly resolved to think their own and not their fathers' thoughts after God. It is easier to commend than to practice the art of patience with the heretical child, and yet our age is mastering that art,—the cynic would aver because of wide-spread indifference. Surely there can be no sorrier coercion than that which insists upon filial acquiescence in the religious dogmas held by parents, not less sorry because the parents may be merely renewing the coercive traditions of their own youth.

It is a hurt alike to children and to truth, to say nothing of the institutions of religion, to command faith the essence and beauty of which lies in its voluntariness. But if parents are not free

to coerce the minds of their children touching articles of faith, it is for children to remember what was said of Emerson,—that "he was an iconoclast without a hammer, removing our idols so gently it seemed like an act of worship." The dissenter need not be a vandal and the filial dissenter ought to be farthest from the vandal in manner touching the religious beliefs of parents. I would not carry the reverent manner to the point of outward conformity, but it may go far without doing hurt to the soul of a child, provided the spiritual reservations are kept clear.

CHAPTER VIII

CONFLICTING STANDARDS

THE conflict of today is oftenest one between parental orthodoxy and filial liberalism or heresy. My own experience has led to the conviction that the clashing does not ordinarily arise between two varying faiths but rather between faith on the one hand and unfaith or unconcern with faith on the other. As for the Jewish home, the problem is complicated by reason of the truth, somehow ignored by Jew and non-Jew, that the religious conversion of a Jew usually leads to racial desertion as far as such a thing can be save in intent. In the Jewish home, racial loyalty and religious assent are so inextricably interwoven,—with ethical integrity in many cases in the balance,—that it is not to be wondered at that conflict oft obtains when the loyalty of the elders is met by the dissidence of the younger and such dissidence

is usually the first step on the way that leads to a break with the Jewish past.

And the battle, generally speaking, is not waged by parents on behalf of the child's soul nor yet in the interest of imperilled Israel, but in the dread of the hurt that is sure to be visited upon the guilt of disloyalty to a heritage cherished and safeguarded through centuries of glorious scorn of consequences. I should be grieved if a child were to say to me: "I cannot repeat the ancient Shema Yisrael, the watchword of the Jew: I find it necessary to reject the foundations of the Jewish faith." My heart, I say, would be sad, but I would not dream of attempting to coerce the mind of a child. I would look with horror and with heartbreak upon the act of a child, who under one pretext or another took itself out of the Jewish bond and away from Jewish life. If, I repeat, a child of mine were to say "I can have nothing to do with Israel," I would sorrow over that child as lost because I should know that its repudiation of the household of Israel was rooted in selfishness colored by self-protective baseness. But, let me again make clear, if a

child should say "I cannot truly affirm God or His unity," I could not decently object, however harrassed and unhappy I might feel. I could not tolerate the vileness of racial cowardice and desertion in a child, but I would have no right to break with it because of religious dissent.

One of the conflicts irrepressible arises when there comes to be a deep gulf fixed between the standards of parents and children, so deep as to make harmonious living impossible. Though it seem by way of excuse for children, it must be admitted that parental guidance is ofttimes woefully lacking, when suddenly falls some edict or interdict arbitrarily and unexpectedly imposed for which there has been no preparation whatsoever. It may be torturing for parents to face the facts, but they have no right to refuse to reap what they have sown, to accept the wholly unavoidable consequences of the training of their children. Parents who ask nothing of children for the first twenty years may not suddenly turn about and ask everything. You cannot until your child is twenty give all and after twenty forgive nothing. Parents may not be idiotically doting for twenty

years and then suddenly become austerely exacting. I have seen parents, who accept a young son's indolence, luxuriousness and dissipation of mind and body as quite the correct thing for youth, later yield to regret over the mental enervation and moral flabbiness of these sons.

A mother came to me not very long ago in tears over her son who had married a poor wanton creature. What I could no more than vaguely hint to the mother was that she had in some part prepared her son for the moral catastrophe by attiring herself after the manner of a woman of the streets. The household that exposes a son to the necessity of living daily by the side of poor imitations of the street-woman will find his ideals of womanhood sadly undermined in the end. The mother who does not offer a son a glimpse of something of dignity and fineness in her own life, alike in matter and manner, may expect little of her son. Standards at best must be cultivated and illustrated through the years of permeable childhood and cannot be improvised and insisted upon whenever in parental judgment it may become necessary.

There is little to choose between the tragedy of parental rejection of children's standards and filial abhorrence of the standards of parents. And both types of tragedy occur from time to time. Sometimes conflict is well, not conflict in the sense of ceaseless clashing but as frank and undisguised acceptance of the fact of irreconcilably discrepant standards. Better some wars than some peace! There are times when parents and children should conflict with one another, when approval is invited or tolerance expected of the intolerable and abhorrent, whether in the case of an unworthy daughter or a viciously dissolute son. I make the proviso that such conflict, decisive and final, can be as far as parents are concerned without the abandonment of love for the erring daughter or wayward son.

Severer, if anything, the conflict becomes when it is children who are bidden to endure and embrace what they conceive to be the lower standards of parents. The clashing may not be less serious because inward and voiceless rather than outward and vocal. If parents feel free to reprove children, it behooves them to have in mind

that children are and of right ought to be free to disapprove of parents, though the conventions seem to forbid children to utter such disapproval. Outward assent may cover up the most violent disapproval, and parenthood should hardly be offered up in mitigation or extenuation any more than the status of orphanhood should shield the parricide or matricide. And it cannot be made too clear, children have the right to reject for themselves the lower standards of parents.

Before me has come from time to time the question whether it is the business of a daughter to yield obedience to a mother who would inflict low and degrading standards upon her child. Or the question is put thus: what would you say to a son, who refuses to enter into and have part in the business of his father which he believes to be unethical, though the father and the rest of the world view it as wholly normal and legitimate? I may not find it in me to urge a child not to obey a parent, neither would I bid a son or daughter waive the scruples of conscience in order to please a parent. Times and occasions there are, I believe, when a child is justified in saying to par-

ents in the terms of finest gentleness and courtesy —the filial *fortiter in re* must above all else be *suaviter in modo*—it is not you whom I disobey, because I must obey a law higher than that which parents can impose upon me. I must obey the highest moral law of my own being.

But this decision is always a grave one and must be arrived at in the spirit of earnestness and humility, never in the mood of defiance. Whether or not this entail the necessity of physical separation is less important than that it be clearly understood that there is a higher law even than parental mandate or filial whim, that parents and child alike do well to understand. Parents dare not fail to act upon the truth that, if intellectual coercion be bad, the unuttered and unexercised compulsions toward a lower moral standard are infinitely worse. A child may not forget that, when parental dictate is repudiated in favor of a higher law, it must in truth be a higher law which exacts obedience. And even peace must be sacrificed when the higher law summons.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN THE HOME

THE parental-filial relation is almost the only institution of society that has not consciously come under the sway of the democratic regime or rather influences. Within a century, the world has passed from the imperial to the monarchical and from the monarchical to the democratic order—save in two rather important fields of life, industry and the home. In these two realms the transformation to the democratic modus remains to be effected,—I mean of course the conscious, however reluctant, acceptance thereof. True it is that many children and fewer parents have made and will continue to make it for themselves, but the process is one which the concerted thought and co-operative action of parents and children can far better bring to consummation. The difficulty of the transformation is increased almost

indefinitely by the microscopic character of the family unit. It is not easy to keep the open processes of the State up to the standards of democracy,—how much more difficult the covert content of the inaccessible home!

In all that parents do with respect to the home, assuming their acceptance of the democratic order and its requirements, they may not forget that the home, like every educational agency of our time, must "train the man and the citizen." Milton's insistence is not less binding today than it was when first uttered nearly three centuries ago. A man cannot be half slave and half free. He cannot be fettered by an autocratic regime within the home and at the same time be a free and effective partner in the working out of the processes of democracy. Democracy and discipline are never contradictory and the discipline of democracy can alone be self-discipline. Professor Patten in his volume, "Product and Climax,"* hints at a real difficulty: "We want our children to retain the plasticity of youth, and yet we believe in a disciplinary education and love

*P. 63.

to put them at difficult tasks, having no end but rigidity of action and a narrower viewpoint. At the same breath we ask for heroes and demand more democracy."

What is really involved when the matter is reduced to its simplest terms, is seen to be a new conception of the home. For many centuries, it has been a world or realm wherein parents filled a number of roles or parts,—chief among these regents on thrones, dispensers of bounty, teachers of the infant mind. Any survey of the home today that surveys more than surface things must take into account one other figure,—or set of figures,—the figure of a child. And the child not as the subject of the parental regent, however wise, nor yet as the unquestioning pupil of the parental tutor, however infallible! The home can no longer remain, amid the crescent sway of the democratic ideal, a kingdom with one or two or even more thrones, nor yet a debating society. Shall we say parliament, seeing that in Parliament and Congress it is reputed to be the habit of men to plead for truth rather than for victory?

The home must become a school wherein par-

ents and children alike sit as eager learners and humble teachers, a school for parents in the latter days in the arts of renunciation and for children in the fine arts of outward courtesy and inward chivalry. In such a classroom the child will learn to think non-filially for itself, though it will not cease to feel filially. Under such auspices, the child will be neither a manageable nor an unmanageable thing but a person bent upon self-direction and self-determination through the arts of self-discipline. In the interest of that self-discipline which parental example can do most to foster, let it be remembered by parents that no rule is as effective with children as self-mastery, that the only convincing and irrefutable authority is inner authoritativeness. Spencer has laid down the ideal for the home: "to produce a self-governing being; not to produce a being to be governed by others." If parents are so unwise as to postpone and deny the right of children to live their lives until after their parents are dead, it may be that these will die too late for their own comfort. Parents who rely upon parental authority, whatever that may mean, in dealing with

children ought to be quietly chloroformed or peacefully deposited in the Museum of Natural History by the side of the almost equally antique Diplodoccus.

The teacherless classroom, the school which is without direction and without dogma *ex cathedra,* is a peculiarly fitting metaphor to invoke. It may serve to remind children that the newly achieved equivalence of the home is not to result in parental subjection or subordination, that the inviolable rights of personality are not exactly a filial monopoly,—crescent filial tyranny being little less intolerable than obsolescent parental despotism—that the passing of the years does not make it exactly easier to abandon or to forswear personality. It were little gain to substitute King Log of filial rule for King Stork of parental command. Filial domination, in other words, is not less odious because of its novelty. In a recent number of *The Outlook,* E. M. Place, writing on "Democracy in the Home," puts it well: "There are two kinds of despotism in the home that are alike and equally intolerable: One is parental and the other is filial."

Bernard Shaw* is quite unparadoxical and almost commonplace in his fear that there is a possibility of home life oppressing its inmates. The peril is not of revolt against the oppressions of home life by its inmates but of unrevolting submission which were far worse on their part. From such oppressions there is but one escape, the deliberate introduction of a democratic regime. "It is admitted that a democracy develops and trains the individual while an autocracy dwarfs and represses the possibilities within. The parent who is autocratic, who says do this and do that because I say so without appealing to the reason and judgment of the child, can never create the real home, the one in which good citizens are made. The democratic home where the individual welfare and the general welfare are given due consideration, where conduct is the result of the appeal to reason, is as much the right of the child as a voice in his own government is the right of an adult."

And one thing more! Some marriages are intolerable and the only way of peace, not of cow-

*Getting Married, Preface, pp. 132-133.

ardice or of evasion, is the way out. Without at this time entering into the question whether the multiplicity of divorces is imperilling the social order, I make bold to say that it ought not be considered an enormity on the part of children nor an indictment of parents, if parents and adult children conclude to live apart, unharrassed and untortured by the conditions of propinquity. Fewer children would enter into obviously fatal marriages if marriage were not regarded as the only decent and respectable way out of the home for a daughter. Who does not know of young people marrying in order to escape from the home? I do not mean to imply that all young people who desire to escape from the home are the victims of domestic repression and parental tyranny, but I have often deemed it lamentable that, for some young people as I have known them, marriage offered the only excuse or pretext for taking oneself out of the home. Such self-exile from home by the avenue of marriage often leads to tragedy graver than any from which it was sought to take refuge. But a democratic regime in the home must include the possibility

of honorable and peaceable withdrawal therefrom.

It should be said by way of parenthesis that marriage is not always a secure refuge from the undemocratically ordered home. For parental intervention in the life of married children is not unimaginable. Under my observation there came some months ago the story of parents, who quite forcibly withdrew the person of their daughter and her infant child from her and her husband's home because the latter was unwilling or unable to expend a grotesquely large sum for its maintenance. This is merely an exaggerated example of the insistence on the part of parents on the unlessened exercise of that power of control over children, which is the very negation of democracy.

CHAPTER X

REVERENCE THY SON AND THY DAUGHTER

REVERENCE thy son and thy daughter lest thy days seem too long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. One of the elements making for conflict between parent and child is the desire of parents who ask for love, taking respect for granted, and the insistence of children, taking love for granted, that parental respect be yielded them. There are many causes that make mutual respect in any real sense difficult between parent and child, parents asking love for themselves as parents, children seeking respect for themselves as persons. After dealing for two decades or nearly that with a child in the terms of love, parents do not find it easy to treat a child with the reverence that is offered to one deemed a complete, rational, unchildlike person.

An eminent theologian once declared that it was easy enough to love one's neighbors but hard

to like them. So might many parents in truth say that it is easy, yea, inevitable, to love their children but very difficult to yield them the reverence of which upon reflection they are found to be deserving. And it happens that parents can and do give their children all but the one thing which they insist upon having from parents, namely, a decent respect. Such respect is in truth impossible as long as parents always think of themselves as parents and of children as children. The temptation presses to urge parents sometimes to forget that they are parents, and to suggest to children sometimes to remember that they are children—in any event, semi-occasionally to recall that to parents children are ever and quite explicably children.

Parents cannot begin too soon to treat children with respect. One of the most disrespectful as well as stupid things that can be done in relation to a child is to treat it like a monkey trained for exhibition purposes in order to "entertain" some resident aunt or visiting uncle. The worst way to prepare a child for self-respect is to exhibit him to ostensibly admiring relatives as if he or she

were a rare specimen in a zoölogical garden. Too many of us are Hagenbacks to our children, not so much for the sake of otherwise unoccupied relatives or especially doting grandparents as for the sake of flattering our own cheap and imbecile pride.

The relation of mutual respect cannot obtain between parent and child as long as the instinct of parental proprietorship is dominant, as long as there is a failure to recognize that a child's individuality must be reckoned with. But there must be the underlying assumption that a child's judgment may be entitled to respect, in other words, is not inherently contemptible. Once assumed that a child may cease to be a child and become a person able to think, decide, choose, act for itself, there is no insuperable difficulty in determining when a child's judgment is entitled to respect, provided of course by way of preliminary that parents are ready to put away the pet superstition of parental infallibility and impeccability. Nothing so calculated to win a child's reverence as parental admission of fallibility generally and of some error of thought and speech in particular!

One rarely hears or learns of a child who feels that parents fail to love it but one comes upon children not a few, normal beings rather than those afflicted with the persecution complex, who deeply lament the fact that parents do not treat them with the reverence owing from normal, wholesome beings to one another. It is this that more than anything else makes some children impatient of the very name, children, the term with its ceaseless implication of relative existence becoming odious to them. No one will maintain that it is easy to achieve relations of reciprocal reverence between parent and child, viewing the fact that family intimacies while tending to foster affection do not make for the strengthening of respect. For respect is most frequently evoked by the unknown and unfamiliar even as the familiar and the known, because it is known, touches the springs of affection. Parental reverence may not be unachievable, but it involves the acceptance of a child as a self-existent being, intellectually, morally, spiritually.

One of the results of the liberating processes of our age is the deeping consciousness of chil-

dren that they have the unchallengeable right to live their own lives, under freedom to develop their own personalities. Revolting against the superimposition of parental personality, the more deadening because childhood is imitative, they have begun to hearken to Emerson's counsel to insist upon themselves. Too often they carry their fidelity to this monition to the illegitimate length of insistence upon idiosyncracy rather than of emphasis upon personality. To cherish and defend every fleeting opinion as sacred and unamendable dogma is not insistence upon self but wilful pride of opinion. And yet even such self-insistence is better than such self-surrender as dwarfs children and by so much belittles parents.

It may seem superfluous to second the claim of children to self-determination, but in truth parents have so long and so crushingly overwhelmed their once-defenceless children with the *force majeure* of their own personality that even a parent may welcome the long-deferred revolt making for self-determination. The child has rightfully resolved not to be a perfect replica,—usually a duplicate of manifold imperfections,—

but to be itself with all its own imperfections on its head. This is the answer to the question whether children ought ever suffer their minds to be coerced. Intellectual compulsion and spiritual coercion are always inexcusable, though in the interest of that much-abused term, the higher morality, children may resort to the accommodation of conformity without sacrifice of the substance of individuality and its basic self-respect.

And when I venture to hint at the concession of outward conformity without of course doing violence to the scruples of conscience, the concession that will bid children to tread the pathway of conformity in externals, I call to mind and to witness a quarter-century's experience in the ministry. In the course of it, it has fallen to my lot to be consulted by numerous children. In only one case has a child said to me, I regret my obedience to my parents' will. But times without number have children said to me, How I rejoice, though sometimes it seemed hard, that I followed the counsel of my mother, that I yielded to my father's will. But one may not bid parents reverence their children and respect their sense of

freedom without intimating to children, howsoever reluctantly, that even parents have some inalienable rights, and that children ought to accord some freedom to parents, even though these be likely to abuse it. Parents, too, must be regarded as free agents. Filial usurpation of parental freedom is not wholly unprecedented in these days of reappraisal of most values.

Parents and children alike will be helped to reverence one another as free agents when they learn that infringement upon the freedom of another is for the most part such an obtrusion of self into the life of another as grows out of the contentlessness of one's own life. No man or woman whose life is full and worth-while has enough of spare time and strength to find it possible to meddle in busy-bodying fashion with the life of others. Nagging, no matter by whom, is just domestic busy-bodying, growing out of the failure to respect the personality of another and out of the vacuity of one's own life. Nagging, however ceaseless, is not correction. Conflict must not be confounded with scolding any more than love and petting are the same thing. Scold-

ing, nagging, ceaseless fault-finding, these are not conflicts nor even the symptoms thereof. These are usually nothing more than signs of inner conflict and unrest finding petty and unavailing, because external, outlets. No home irrespective of circumstance can be free from conflict in which there is a failure to understand that every member of the household is a self-regarding and inviolate personality and that the physical contacts of the family life are no excuse for the ceaseless invasion of personality.

I have not said economically, though it is not always easy for parents to remember that economic dependence in no wise involves intellectual, moral, spiritual dependence. The difficulty, as has already been pointed out, is greatly enhanced by reason of the fact that parents and children are too apt to label and classify and pigeon-hole one another, parents assumed to be visionless maintainers and conservators of the status quo and children regarded as vandal disturbers of the best possible of worlds.

To confound voluntary reverence with the obligations of gratitude is indeed the woefullest of

blunders. I have sometimes thought that the parental-filial relationship is not infrequently strained because it rests upon bounty or indebtedness, acknowledged or unacknowledged. There is a strain which ofttimes proves too hard to be borne between benefactor and beneficiary. This strain may be eased if parents will but avoid thinking of themselves as benefactors and children will but remember that the fact of adolescence or post-adolescence does not cancel all the relationships and conditions of earlier life. I cannot conceive of deeper unwisdom than to rest one's case with children in the matter of unyielded obedience or ungranted reverence or aught else upon the basis of gratitude. It is as futile as it is vicious to dream of exacting gratitude, seeing that gratitude is not a debt to be paid, least of all a toll to be levied. Is there really much to choose between the parent plaintively appealing for filial gratitude and the termagant wife insistently clamoring for love.

If parents bent upon having gratitude and appreciation would but remember that during the years in which parents do most for their children the latter are blissfully unconscious, it would help

them over the rough places of seeming inappreciation and ingratitude. The first ten years of a child's life are those of most constant and tender service on the part of parents, the period of deepest anxieties and uttermost sacrifices. And yet the fact of infancy and early childhood precludes the possibility of remembrance, understanding, appreciation. The conscious relation of parent and child does not really begin much before the tenth year.

A wise teacher of the Northwest once said: "Children are either too young or too old to be physically punished." Something of the same kind might be said with respect to appeals for gratitude. Either these are unnecessary or else they are unavailing. In any event, the relation between parent and child must never be brought down to the level of one of bestowal and acceptance of bounty and the obligations thereby entailed. The highest magnanimity is needed on the part of parents, so deep and uncancellable is the debt of children,—by parents to be obliterated from memory, by children to be translated into the things of life.

CHAPTER XI

THE OBSESSION OF POSSESSION

THE undemocratic character of the home reveals itself in a way that is familiar enough,—the way of parental possession. Nothing could be more difficult for parents to abandon than the sense of ownership, tenderly conceived and graciously fostered. And yet, hard as the lesson may be, it must be learned by parents that the spirit of proprietorship cannot coexist with the democratic temper in the home.

I sometimes regret that children are not born full-grown, that they do not subsequently develop or devolve into babies, so that the earliest aspect of a child, diminutive, helpless, should not, as it does, evoke the sense of absolute and exclusive ownership. If children would only at six months or a year begin to argue, vigorously to combat their parents' views, the ordinary transition from bland acquiescence to over-facile dissent would be

somewhat less harsh and startling. The thing, which perhaps does most to intensify the shock and pain incidental to divergence of opinion, is that the first eight or ten years of childhood give no intimation or little more than intimation of the possibility of conflict in later years. The unresisting acquiescence of children in never-ending bestowal of parental bounty offers no hint of the possibility of future strife. The legal plea of surprise might almost be offered up by parents, who find, as one of them has expressed it, that, when children are young, they "stay put," can be found whenever sought. Later they neither stay nor are put, but move tangentially and, it would seem by preference, into orbits of their own,—and not always heavenly orbits.

Some parents never wean themselves nor even seek to do so from the sense of proprietorship, which is sure to be rudely disturbed unless parents are wise to yield it up. No grown, reasoning, self-respecting person wishes to be or to be dealt with as a being in fief to another. Ofttimes it proves excedingly hard for fond parents to relinquish the sense of ownership, for the latter is

deeply satisfying and even flattering to the owner. In very truth, parents must come to understand that children are not born to them as possessions. The parental part does not confer ownership rights. Children should not be regarded and cherished as a life-long possession nor even for a time. They are entrusted by the processes of birth and the decree of fate to parents, to be cared for during the days of dependence, to be nurtured and developed till maturity, the latter to mark the ending of the period of conscious parental responsibility.

As long as children have not reached adolescence and the consciousness thereof, they may endure nor even note the mood of parental possession. But once complete self-consciousness dawns, the sense of ownership becomes intolerable to any child that is more than a domestic automaton, and, if persisted in, makes any wholesomeness of relation between parent and child unthinkable. Many years ago, a sage friend tendered me some unforgettable counsel. I had, perhaps unwisely, commiserated with him upon the fact that his lovely children, sons and daugh-

ters alike, were leaving the parental roof and beginning their lives anew in different and remote parts of the land. His answer rang prompt and decisive: "Children were not given to us to keep. They are placed with us for a time in trusteeship and now that they are old enough to leave us and to stand upon their own feet, it is well for them to make their own homes and become the builders of their own lives." This sage and his like-minded wife had achieved the art of dispossessing themselves of their children, or rather they had never suffered themselves to tread the pathway of possession.

To a rational adult the sense of possession by another is irksome, save in the case of youthful lovers whose irrationality may for a time take the form of pleasure in the fact of possession by another. But when sanity enters into the joy of the love-relation, then the sense of ecstasy in being possessed vanishes and with its passing comes a renewal of self-possession which alone is complete sanity. Self-possession brooks no invasion or possession of personality by another. The matter of possession becomes gravely disturbing

because the parental tendency in the direction of proprietorship becomes keenest at a time when children are least disposed to be possessed in any way. As children near adulthood, they desire to be autonomous persons rather than things or possessions. Then the conflict comes, and, though not consciously, is fought for and against possession.

Briefly, adolescence brings with it an insistence upon the end of the relative and the beginning of absolute, that is unrelated, existence. Somehow and for the most part unhappily, the child's insistence upon absolute self-possession and self-existence comes at a time,—it may be evocative rather than synchronous—when parents most desire or feel the need to be parents. This craving for a maximum of parenthood, not in the interest of filial possession, is evoked by the normal, adolescent child, as it begins to find its main interests and absorptions outside of the home, with the consequent loosening of what seemed to be irrefragably close and intimate ties. And the parental sense of proprietary supervision is not lessened by the circumstance that the child now faces those

problems the rightful solution of which means so much to its future.

Thus does the conflict arise. Children, though they know it not or know it only in part, face the great tests and challenges of life, rejoicing that these are to be their experiences, their problems, their tests. Parents view these self-same challenges and are deeply concerned lest these prove too much for children and leave them broken and blighted upon life's way. It is really fairer to say that what is viewed as the parental instinct of possession is really nothing more than the eagerness of parents somehow to bestow upon children the unearned fruits of experience. It is the primary and inalienable right of children to blunder, to falter upon the altar-steps, and blundering is a teacher wiser though costlier than parents. Reckoning and rueing the price they have paid for the lessons of experience, parents, whose good-will is greater than their wisdom, insist upon the right to transmit to children through teaching these lessons of experience. But they fail to realize that certain things are unteachable and intransmissible.

Confounding the classroom with the school of life, it is assumed that certain truths are orally teachable. Children, building better than they know, insist that the wisdom of experience cannot be orally communicated, that it is not to be acquired through parental bestowal or teaching or insistence, but solely through personal effort, and, though at first they know it not, through hardship and suffering. Wisdom cannot be imparted to children by parents under an anaesthesia that averts pain and suffering. Hard is it for parents to accept the truth pointed out by Coleridge that experience is only a lamp in a vessel's stern, which throws a light on the waters we have passed through, none on those which lie before us.

The conflict then is between children who insist upon the privilege of acquiring the wisdom of life through personal experience which includes blundering and suffering, and parents whose sense of possession strengthens their native resolution to bring to loved children all the benefits and gains of life's experiences without permitting children to pay the price which life exacts. And

parents, in the unreasoning passion to ward off hurt and wound from the heads of children, forget that if the wisdom of experience were transmissible we should have moral stagnation and spiritual immobility in the midst of life.

But if parents may not expect to be able to transmit the body of their life-experience to children, neither should children assume that the multiplication table is an untested hypothesis because accepted by parents, or that elementary truths are wholly dubious because parental assent has been given thereto. If parents must learn that children cannot be expected to regard every thesis as valid solely because held by parents, children need hardly take it for granted, though it may of course be found to be true, that the parental viewpoint is uniformly erring and invalid.

If parents, who are tempted to yield to the instinct of proprietorship rather, as we have seen, than of domination, would but understand, as was lately suggested in a psychological analysis of Barrie's "Mary Rose," that there are women who mother the members of their circles so persistently that they impose a certain childishness on

them, the mother's influence often producing incompetence and timidity! To such parents, however, as will not admit the fact of possession, it remains to be pointed out that parents do not live forever and are usually survived by their children. The "owned" child is not unlikely with the years to become and to remain a poor, miserable dependent intellectually and spiritually, once its parents are gone.

View another case, the marriage of the "owned" child, even when it does not accept any marriage that offers as a mode of release from parental bondage. I have had frequent occasion to note that the "owned" child, freed from parental suppression, is often revenged upon parental tyranny by an era of luxurious despotism, or, what is worse, renews the reign of ownership and dependence by becoming the "owned" wife or undisowned husband, a sorry, beggarly serf, whose lifelong dependence in the worst sense is largely the sequel to parental proprietorship or overlordship. The parental tyranny that is well-meant and gentle yields place in marriage to a tyranny that is most untender and may even be

brutal, its victim, male or female, habituated by parental usage to the art of unrevolting submission, or, when not thus habituated, goaded to a vindictive and compensatory sense of mastery.

To urge parents to relinquish the sense of possession, to prepare them for the day when they shall find it inevitable to "give up," is to do them a real service. Let them prepare with something of fortitude for the day that comes to many parents, which is to establish and confirm the fact of parental dispensableness. The fortitude may have to be Spartan in character. It is our fate, and parents, who are practised in the art of long-suffering endurance, must learn to bear this last test of strength with undimmable courage and even to rejoice therein.

CHAPTER XII

PARENTS AND VICE-PARENTS

THERE is a further problem over and beyond all those heretofore set forth,—the problem, which might be described under the term, the complication of relatives, the problem, shall we call it, of help or hindrance from family members, who, asked or unasked and usually unasked, undertake to act as vice-parents prior to the resignation or decease of parents. The relationship is not ordinarily one of reciprocity, for, however great be the help or hurt that can be done to a child by an intervening kinsman or kinswoman, the relation of the child to him or her does not as a rule root very deep in the life of the younger person.

One thing parents may ask, though usually they do not: one thing children ought to ask, though usually they would not; namely, that when relatives touch the life of parent and child,—as

they not infrequently do,—they shall exert their influence on behalf of understanding between parent and child. I have seen much done to wreck the home by those who forget that the parental-filial relation is a sanctuary not lightly to be trespassed upon even by those who physically dwell in close proximity thereto.

One of the commonest forms of pernicious intervention is the attempt to mitigate parental severity, to soften parental asperity, on the part of nice, soft, respectable kinsmen and kinswomen, who regard a child under twenty years or even under twenty-five in some cases as a little lap-dog to be caressed and fondled, but in no wise to be dealt with as a human to whom much may be given and from whom more must be asked. Parents' standards may seem, and even be, exigent, but the attempt to modify their rigor may not be made by those lacking in fundamental reverence for a child, and in conscious hope for its wise, noble, self-reliant maturity.

The kind uncle and the indulgent aunt have no right under heaven to wreak their unreasoning tenderness upon niece or nephew in such fashion

as to make any and every standard seem cruelly exigent to the child. Parents are not uniformly, though oft approximately, infallible, and family members have the right and duty to take counsel with, which always means to give counsel, to parents but not in the presence of children. I have seen children moved to distrust of parental mandate and judgment even when these were wise and just by reason of the malsuggestion oozing forth from relatives, the zeal of whose intervention is normally in inverse proportion to the measure of their wisdom. Childish rebellion against parental guidance, however enlightened, oft dates from the time of some avuncular remonstrance against or antique impatience with parents "who do not understand the dear child." But there is another and a better way, and kinsfolk can frequently find it within the range of their power to supplement parental teaching in ways that shall be profitable alike to child and parent.

The nearest, the most constant impact upon the child is that of the mother, and less often of the father. The mountain summit to which greatness ascends in the sight of multitudes is often nothing

more than some height, reached in loneliness and out of the sight of the world by a brave, mother-soul, wrestling through unseen and unaided struggle for that, which shall later be disclosed to the world as the immortal achievement of a child and so acclaimed by the plaudits of the world. One remembers, for example, that the mother of William Lloyd Garrison wrote of her colored nurse during her illness: "A slave in the sight of man, but a freeborn soul in the sight of God." Thus is she revealed as the mother of the Abolition struggle.

Professor Brumbaugh,* who ceased for a time to be a good teacher in order to be an indifferent Governor of his Commonwealth, tells the story of Pestalozzi taken by his grandfather to the homes of the poor, the child saying: "When I am a man, I mean to take the side of the poor." "He lived like a beggar that he might teach beggars to live like men." Truly one must find the mother behind or rather before the man. The mother of Emerson is thus described by his son†:

*The Making of a Teacher, p. 34.

†Emerson in Concord (E. W. Emerson) p. 8.

"To a woman of her stamp, provision for her sons meant far more than mere food, raiment and shelter. Their souls first, their minds next, their bodies last; this was the order in which their claims presented themselves to the brave mother's mind. Lastly in those days the body had to look after itself very much; more reverently they put it, the Lord will provide." After his first week of Harvard life, Mrs. Emerson wrote to her son*: "What most excites my solicitude is your moral improvement and your progress in virtue. Let your whole life reflect honor on the name you bear." Curious from the viewpoint of modern practice that nothing was said about the weekly or fortnightly hamper of goodies or the cushions shortly to follow,—to say nothing of the ceaselessly entreated remittance!

The influence of a father upon his son comes to light as one reads Dr. Emerson's life of his father: "In view of the son's shrinking from all attempts to wall in the living truth with forms, his father's early wish and hope, while still in Harvard, of moving to Washington and there found-

*Emerson in Concord, p. 21.

ing a church without written expression of faith or covenant, is worthy of note." One comes to see that a man is what he is because of the love he bears his mother, as one reads of Commodore Perkins* that on the eve of the Battle of Mobile Bay he wrote to her: "I know that I shall not disgrace myself no matter how hot the fighting may be, for I shall think of you all the time." Thomas Wentworth Higginson† tells that his own strongest impulse in the direction of anti-slavery reform came from his mother. Being once driven from place to place by an intelligent negro driver, my mother said to him that she thought him very well situated after all; on which he turned and looked at her, simply saying: "Ah, Missus, free breath is good." Respecting his arrest later in connection with John Brown and Harper's Ferry, Higginson writes‡: "Fortunately it did not disturb my courageous mother, who wrote: 'I assure you it does not trouble me, though I dare say that some of my friends are commiserating me for having a son riotously and routously engaged.' "

*Tucker, Public-Mindedness, p. 133.
†Cheerful Yesterdays, p. 123.
‡Cheerful Yesterdays, p. 160.

Again and again, we look back and find that the great deed or noble utterance of some historic figure is merely the echo of an earlier word or deed of a forbear. We have seen it in the influences that shaped or in any event steered Garrison, Mazzini, Pestalozzi. Former President Tucker* of Dartmouth College declares that the memorable speech of the Defender of the Constitution is to be explained not by his own greatness. His father had made it before him. . . . This speech was in his blood. The fact is that the great address of the Defender of the Constitution was made by his father fifty years earlier when Colonel Webster moved New Hampshire to enter the Union." The grandfather of Theodore Parker was the minister of Concord at the time of the Concord fight and on the Sunday previous he had preached on the text: "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

That a kinsman or kinswoman may equal, even surpass, a parent in influence wide and deep upon a child might be variously illustrated. No more familiar illustration obtains than that of Mary

*Public-Mindedness, p. 77.

Moody, aunt of Emerson, of whom his son writes: "She gave high counsel. It was the privilege of certain boys to have this immeasurably high standard indicated in their childhood, a blessing which nothing else in education could supply. Lift up your aims, always do what you are afraid to do, scorn trifles,—such were the maxims she gave her nephews and which they made their own. . . . Be generous and great and you will confer benefits on society, not receive them, through life. Emerson himself said of his aunt*: her power over the mind of her young friends was almost despotic, describing her influence upon himself as great as that of Greece or Rome.

It may in truth often be a sister who brings strength and heartening to a man. Ernest Renan writes to his sister Henriette†: "But that ideal does not exist in our workaday world, I fear. Life is a struggle, Life is hard and painful, yet let us not lose courage. If the road be steep, we have within us a great strength; we shall sur-

*Higginson, Contemporaries, p. 2.

†Darmesteter, Life of Renan, p. 45.

mount our stumbling-block. It is enough if we possess our conscience in rectitude, if our aim be noble, our will firm and constant. Let happen what may, on that foundation we can build up our lives." Again he wrote to her: "My lonely, tired heart finds infinite sweetness in resting upon yours. I sometimes think that I could be quite happy in a simple, common life, which I should ennoble from within. Then I think of you and look higher." The tender inquisitress was not satisfied, declares the biographer of Renan,* until all was pure, exact, discreet and true. She said to her brother: Be thou perfect. Most of all she sought to cultivate in him the habit of veracity, a habit the seminary had not inculcated it appears. So great was the influence of Henriette that for years afterward not only did her brother act as she would bid him act, but, far rarer triumph of her love, he thought as she would have bid him think, in all seriousness, in all tenderness, with a remote and noble elevation, checking as they rose those impulses toward irony, frivolity, scepticism, which she had not loved.

**Idem,* p. 103.

CHAPTER XIII

WHAT OF THE JEWISH HOME?

BEFORE answering the question, what of the Jewish home, before discussing the problem to what extent does the irrepressible conflict take place therein, it is needful to place the Jewish home in its proper setting. In truth, the historical glory of the Jewish home, let Jews remember and non-Jews learn, is the most beautiful and honorable chapter in Jewish history. Nothing can dim the brightness of its one-time splendor. If nothing else of Israel were to survive, the memory of the home would honor and glorify Israel for all time. Truly there is nothing in world history quite comparable thereto.

Somehow the world without has been touched to awe at the beauty and radiance of the home in Israel. It has felt that the reverent love within the Jewish home was more than love and rever-

ence, that these were touched by that beauty of holiness which gave to them their exalted quality. The Jewish home blended two ideals, patriarchal and matriarchal. It was never patriarchate alone, nor yet solely matriarchate. It was a home governed by a joint sovereignty. It rested no more truly upon tender love for the mother than upon real reverence for the father. In a sense, it might be thought that herein the Jewish home was not unique, for Plato had said: "After the gods and demi-gods, parents ought to have the most honor." And Aristotle had added: "It is proper to give them honor such as is given to the gods." But the God whom Israel honored stood infinitely higher than the gods whom the Greeks honored before parents. Canon Driver points out in the Cambridge Bible that duty to parents stands next to duties toward God: the penalty for cursing them is death even as the penalty for blaspheming God. Ibn Ezra held that, if Israel keep this commandment,—Honor thy father and thy mother,—it will not be exiled from the promised land. Exiled it was from the promised land, but obedience to the fifth Commandment did

much to make the life of Israel despite exile one of the beauty of promise fulfilled.

The grace and glory of the Jewish home were twofold. The selflessness of parents evoked such filial tenderness and self-forgetfulness as to bring about the perfect understanding of togetherness. The reverence of the Jewish child for parents continued even beyond death. The passing of the visible presence of a parent little lessened and often greatened the revering love of the Jewish child. This accounts for the pathos and romance associated with the "Kaddish" chant of the Hebrew liturgy, forerunner of the Mass, and perhaps in the mind of Jesus when he bade, Do this in remembrance of Me. This glorification of the Author of death as well as life, is not to be viewed as a symbol of ancestor-worship but rather as a sign of the tenderest of human pieties.

What the child was in the Jewish home it became because of what its parents were toward it. To say that the Jewish mother has been unsurpassed in the history of men because she dreamed that a child by her borne might become a Messiah

of its people does not quite touch the roots of the unbelievable tenderness and beauty of maternal dedication in the Jewish home. Neither is the relation of the Jewish father and child wholly to be explained by the fact of his involuntary aloofness from the world and his dependence upon the home for whatsoever of peace and joy this world could give him. It is not too much to say that the Messianic ideal of the Jewish mother and the fact of the Jew's exclusion from the world without may have tended to deepen and to hallow parental love, but the mystery abides not less wondrous in some ways than the mystery of Israel's survival.

Certain perils, it might be imagined, were the inevitable accompaniment of or sequel to this wonderful love and reverence within the Jewish home,—the peril of repression of the inner life of the child chiefly and also of the parent. But students of Jewish history would hardly aver that the intellectual and spiritual nature of the child was really stifled or stunted by reason of the illimitable filial reverence. And if at times there was intellectual self-repression and spiritual self-sur-

render, who can measure the inmost and invisible gains which accrued to and rewarded the child?

It is a happy thought of Renan* that all the joys of Israel are in reality an enlargement of the family life; their feast is a repast in common, the natural eucharist to which the poor is admitted, a thanksgiving for life as it is with its limits, which do not prevent it from being present under the eye of Jahweh who dispenses good and evil. The Fifth Commandment bade more than obedience on the part of children to parents; by indirection it enjoined parents and children alike to magnify the home, to make it the centre and core of Israel's life, so that it became the very salvation of Israel when no other salvation was at hand.

The very name that is given to Israel, the house of Israel, seems to have been prophetic of what the family life of Israel was destined to be. The house of Israel and the life of the Jewish home became interchangeable terms. That the Jewish home safeguarded and perpetuated Israel through ages of darkness and tears and tragedy is true beyond peradventure. Whether this home-

*History of Israel, Vol. II, p. 163.

life in all its dignity and grandeur was the result of the ghetto is rather doubtful. The ghetto, which was the environment of the exile in its narrowest terms, gave to Israel an unique opportunity for the development of what might be called its genius for home-life. But if opportunity and genius conjoined to create the result, this genius was inspired and fortified from generation to generation by willing, even eager, obedience to the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue.

One might search far and wide without finding a finer illustration of the character of the Jewish parental-filial relation than the immemorial service in the Jewish home, commonly known as the Seder or service of the Passover eve. That Seder with its family symposium has been the glory of Israel throughout the ages. Ofttimes its serene joy and august peace have been marred by brutal attack and onslaught, but even this, the invasion by the world's hosts, has but served to lend a new dignity and pathos to its beauty. Precious and historic memories revolve about this family-scene, the children turning to the parents for counsel and teaching and parents turning to their children

and giving these of their best by bringing God and the recognition of His wonderful leading to the life of the child.

That Seder of the Passover eve in the Jewish home reminds one of the Biblical parable,—for parable it is though the chronicler know it not,—that even in slave-ridden Egypt the angel of death could not touch the Jewish home. It was exempt from the ravages of death, because within it was something of immortal quality, something immune to the challenge of destruction. The Jew who knows something of the history of his people, over and beyond the list of boarding-schools so Christian as to shut out Jewish children, knows that this was prefigured by the prophet when he announced in the unforgettable word of the Hebrew Bible: And He shall turn the heart of the parents to the children and the heart of the children to the parents. That is exactly what the Jewish home did, turning the hearts of parent and child to each other, knitting them together in one indissoluble tie, so that the home become as naught else the very soul of Israel.

CHAPTER XIV

THE JEWISH HOME TO-DAY

So much for the traditions of the Jewish home! What of it in this day and generation? The fact cannot be denied that the Jewish home is seriously threatened in our time. I do not go so far as a commentator on Jewish affairs, who declared as long as a decade ago: "The Jewish home, as we have known and loved it for ages, has ceased to be. It is no longer a Jewish home but the home of Jews. All the grace and beauty of Jewish ceremonial and custom have died out of it. The young generation goes out into the world, unaffected by the influences that held past generations loyal, and so Judaism and the community go alike to waste." And, yet, that the indictment is not wholly unjustifiable came to me when I learned of a Jewish mother who insisted upon a young married daughter averting the birth of a child, because its coming would interfere with and

abbreviate a long-planned summer vacation in European lands. The home which trifles with life's dignities and sanctities in this fashion is become a mockery of the one-time majestic Jewish home.

It will be noted that the reference is not to the vast majority of Jewish homes in West European lands and in our lands, for these are the homes of the poor. And the homes of the poor present a problem, which in the absence of economic-industrial adjustment no ethical aspiration will solve. As for the largest number of Jewish homes in America, in them dwell victims of the mass migration movement which has within two generations transplanted huge numbers from continent to continent. Who will decide which raises the more serious problem, the involuntary migration of the hapless many or the voluntary imitation of the world by an unhappy few? There has really been more than a migration, for innumerable hosts have suddenly been compelled not only to wander from one continent to another but to leave one world behind them and to enter into a wholly new world.

The move is not merely from Russia or Roumania, Galicia or the Levant to America; it is a plunge into a new world-life with all that such sudden sea-change involves. This transplantation to strange climes and an alien life results in many cases in the tragedy of utter misunderstanding and alienation between parent and children, a tragedy remaining for some Zangwill to portray. But it is not only the homes of the poor and the oppressed Jews the texture of which has greatly altered within a generation. For within the homes of the well-to-do in Israel a graver and a sadder peril has come to threaten as a result of the repudiation, though it be implicit, of parental responsibility at its highest and of filial duty at its finest, which repudiation in truth is sequent upon the abandonment of the ancient and long unwearied idealism of the Jew.

If the homes of the poor are endangered from without, the home of the rich is in peril from within. Prosperity and its abandonment of the highest have undermined the home to a degree beyond the possibility of the effect of adversity. If it behoove children not to be over-insistent upon

their parents accepting their ways and becoming exactly like them, it is trebly necessary for children to understand that foreignism in parents does not justify them in compelling parents to assimilate the externals of the new world and its new life. Under these circumstances, parents have a peculiar right to be themselves, to insist upon the essentials of their own *modus vivendi,* to cherish and maintain the things by which they lived in a past arbitrarily cut off.

It ought to be said that the Jewish home has been more menaced by the life of the world into which Israel has in some part entered than by any other circumstance. The truth is that the Jew's home is become a part of the world and in its new orientation (or occidentalization) has lost its other-wordly touch or nimbus. Thus Israel never really found it necessary to stress filial obedience. The latter has always been one of the things taken for granted. Save for its obviously necessary inclusion in the Decalogue, the Jew has always dealt with filial obedience as it dealt with the theory of divine existence or the fact of Israel's persecution taking all alike for granted.

If the conflict in the home is a little sharper within than without Jewish life, this is in some degree the defect of its quality. The large part played by the home in the life of the Jew makes the transition to the new order seem harsh and bitter. The Jewish parent of yore lived his life within the walls of the home, and the Jewish mother particularly passed her days within the limits of a home. It is not easy for the Jewish mother to surrender that sense of possession which grows out of undivided preoccupation with child or children, that sense of possession fostered as much by a child's sense of dutifulness as by parental concern. The Jewish mother, whom the middle-aged have known and loved, found her deepest and most engrossing interest in the days and deeds of her children. It may be and it is necessary for the Jewish mother to relinquish her long-time sense of ownership, but let it not be imagined to be easy. And it is the harder because with, perhaps before, its relinquishment comes a sense of deep loss and hurt to the child.

Nor would the necessity of yielding up the sense of possession in itself be so serious, if there

did not coincide with it an ofttimes exaggerated sense of independence in the Jewish child. We may be witnessing an almost conscious break with the centuried tradition of filial self-subordination, or it may be that the revolt of the Jewish child seems more serious than it is because of the filial habit of obedience in the life of the Jewish home. Whatever be the explanation of the new filial role in the Jewish home, it is a sorry thing that Israel in its assimilative passion should be ready to surrender the home and its historic content, should be so unsure of itself and so sure of the world without as to be willing to give up its best and most precious for the sake of uniformity with the world.

And there are Jews who forget that the world reverences and honors the Jewish home even as it reveres the Bible of the Jew! A wise friend has written: "Whenever and wherever I have been asked by non-Jews what I consider the greatest and most permanent contribution of the Jew to civilization, I have always answered: the Jewish home. Ancient Greece knew of no real home as we understand it. Israel did." But it is not

enough to laud the Jewish home of old. If Jews are to rest satisfied with praises of the Jewish home that was instead of seeking to beautify and ennoble the Jewish home that is, then, remembering the word of Juvenal, virtue is the sole and only nobility, may it truly be said of the Jew in the language of the rabbis: "As the dust differs from the gold, so our generation differs from the generations of the fathers."

And yet there is no Jewish question here, though there be a Jewish aspect of the wider problem we are considering. Jewish parents have in the past for reasons given or hinted at been almost Chinese in their adoration of a child. And when the day of parenthood dawns, these may be as unwisely adoring and hopelessly indulgent touching their children as were their parents. It may be that in the past Jewish parents have given more to their children than have non-Jewish. Let less be given parentally and more be asked,—Jewish parent and Jewish child need this counsel most.

CHAPTER XV

THE SOVEREIGN GRACES OF THE HOME

THE home lies somewhere between the outer and the inner life of man and its life touches and is touched by both. It is one of the highways through which one passes from the inner to the outer life, the place, to change the figure, where the inner life is touched by the outer world and by it tested and searched and challenged. The place of the home in relation to the inner life is shown forth by the truth that nothing which the world can give balances the hurts and wounds one may suffer within the home. Yet such is the magic and mystery of the home that it can heal every wound, which the world without inflicts. It is in the home that the peace of the inner life most clearly reveals itself, that one's soul finds itself most nearly invulnerable to the wounds of the world without. Shakespeare is true to the facts, if facts they may be called, in his tremendous pic-

ture of the storm on the heath, which in its terror is less terrible than the storm in the home-life of the banished and broken Lear.

The relations of the home constitute a test which nearly every one of us must meet and unhappiest is he who is outside of their range. No school, no testing-place like that of the home! And it is well to bear in mind that no man greatly succeeds in life, who fails in his own home, not merely because the rewards of the world cannot compensate for the failure of home-life, but because no successes without save from utterly tragic failure him who has failed within the home!

Home may be heavenly in its harmonies or hellish in its discords. To maintain that the difference is the result of love or lovelessness in the home does not tell the whole story. Whether home is to be heaven or hell, wracked by discord or attuned to harmony, depends upon them that make it, all of them, yea, upon the all of all that make a home. One alone may mar a home, any one of its members, husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister, though all together are needed to minister to its perfection.

And how are the harmonies to be achieved and the discords to be avoided? And the answer is,—through courtesy, consideration, comradeship,—all in turn, alike in the major and minor issues of life, going back to self-rule not self-will. Courtesy and consideration together constitute the chivalry of the home, courtesy its outer token, consideration its inner prompting. The chivalry of the home is a reminder, occasionally required by both parents and children, that courtesy is not a grace if reserved for and bestowed solely upon strangers. The man or child, who is a churl at home and limits his courtesy extra-murally, is not only a pitiable boor but a contemptible hypocrite.

And consideration is something more than courtesy, for the latter springs from it as both are rooted in the sympathy which is the *origo et fons* of comradeship. Consideration like an angel comes, moving the family members to think with and for others, not of themselves as pitilessly misunderstood but as capable of understanding others because possessed of the will to understand.

But there can be neither outward courtesy nor

inmost consideration, least of all comradeship, unless there be the grace of avoidance of those temptations to selfishness, which more than all else blight the home by leading to conflict irrepressible and irreconciliable. Unselfishness in its higher or lower sense is the *conditio sine qua non* of the parental-filial relation, even as selfishness is deadly not only to those who are guilty of it but to those who needlessly endure it. For selfishness it is which more than all else converts the home into a prison, even a dungeon. Parents have the right to ask of children that they shall avoid the besetting sin of childhood, namely, selfishness, though usually the guilt of filial selfishness rests upon the head of parents who long suffer children to indulge in selfishness for the sake of parental indulgence. Fostering filial selfishness is ofttimes little more than a cheap and easy way of holding oneself up for self-approval and to filial commendation.

Nothing is more important than to teach children, especially the children of the privileged, the art of unselfishness unless it be for the parents of privileged children to practice it. The fact that

many, many families in our days are of the one or two-children variety gives to the child a tremendous impact in the direction of self-centredness, —toward what I have elsewhere called an egocentric or "meocentric" world. If, however, as happens too commonly, children are treated by selfishly and idiotically indulgent parents during the years of childhood and adolescence as if every one of them were the center of the universe, it will little avail to cry out against the child's selfishness just because he or she has reached twenty. Other-centredness will not be substituted for self-centredness at twenty, however much parents may be dismayed, if during the first twenty years the perhaps native selfishness of the child have been ministered to in every imaginable way.

In order to deepen the spirit of filial unselfishness it is needful to give or rather to help children to have and to hold an aim bigger than themselves. Given unselfishness, the freedom from self-seeking and self-ministration and the presence of the will to minister and to forbear, that unselfishness which is the exclusive grace neither of parent nor of child, then comradeship, the hand-

in-hand quest of life, become possible. Then and only then may parent and child become comrades, not fellow-boarders and roomers and hoarders, but fellow-travelers and sojourners alike along life's way. Without comradeship, whatever else there be, there can be no such thing as home. Comradeship shuts out the sense of possession, prevents the invasion of personality, averts alike parental tyranny and filial autocracy.

But comradeship is not to be achieved through the word of parents and children,—Go to, let us be comrades. For comradeship is that which grows out of the cumulative and united experience of parent and child, if these have so lived and so labored together that unconsciously and inevitably there come to pass the fellowship of life's pilgrimage in real togetherness, comrades with souls "utterly true forever and aye." No compulsion to sympathy and understanding and forbearance where the spirit of comradeship dwells! And such comradeship is unaffected by outward circumstance or by diversities of viewpoint or of educational opportunity or of worldly possession.

Perhaps comradeship ought to be stressed for a moment, viewing a tendency not quite uncommon to shelve parents, however politely, on the part of children once they imagine themselves to have become mature beings. Parental euthenasia can be practised or attempted in many and subtle ways. Sir William Osler's forty years as a limit, —of course the attribution is essentially fallacious,—fit into the notion of those children who are for an easy and if possible painless superannuation of lagging parents.

Needless to insist, comradeship means infinitely more than physical proximity. If children but knew how at last when they are grown and maturing, parents sometimes hunger for the companionship of son and daughter, these might be ready to give up some of their comrades whether first-rate or third-rate to satisfy the hunger of the parental heart for companionship with the child. True, it is, that parents must fit themselves throughout life for such comradeship, keeping their hearts young and their minds unclosed. But frequently the failure is due to the sheer selfishness of children, that selfishness which considers

not nor forbears, which lightly misunderstands and unadvisedly rejects the parent as comrade on the way, though the parent-heart hunger and ache. Children should not require exhortation to the end that they remember parents are not feeders, clothiers, stewards, landlords, boarding-house keepers, and that in exceptional cases these continue to have the right to live after passing the Methuselah frontier of fifty or sixty.

One is polite in exchange of courteous word even with one's hotel clerk. Occasionally one confides in the mistress of a boarding-house. If children but knew the pain some parents feel in that attitude of children which reduces them in their own sight to the level of utterly negligible rooming-house keepers for strangers, they could not demean themselves as they do. This complaint has been voiced to me a number of times within recent years, alike by people of cultivation and by simple, untutored folk. In the former case, the filial silences are generally due to disagreements and misunderstanding. There is such a thing as the acceptance of hospitality on the part of children which compels certain reciprocal

courtesies. When children for any reason are unable or unwilling to yield the elementary courtesies of the home, it is for them in all decency to decide whether they are justified in accepting its hospitality.

And comradeship must welcome not regret, nurture not stifle, the fine impatiences of youth, the eager, oft unconsidered, superb, at best resistless, idealisms of youth. Parents are not to mistake this finely impatient idealism for unreasoning impetuosity. They are to remember that, howsoever inconveniently and troublingly, youth represents the ungainsayable imperiousness of the future. Parental scoffing and cynicism are more chilling to the heart of youth than the world's derision. The world's scornful darts fall hurtless upon the shield of him, armed by parental hand for life's battle with the weapons of idealism. And in comradeship it is not enough for parents not to mock nor to be scornful of children's so-called impracticable ideals. Where these are not, parents must commend them by their own works rather than command them by their words. Comradeship always means the tak-

ing of counsel and not the giving of commands. But there can be no taking of counsel with youth at twenty if the parental habit have been one of command prior to that time. Twenty years of absolutism cannot suddenly be replaced by the democratic way of holding counsel.

Parents must be willing to forfeit all save honor in pressing upon youth the categorical and undeniable summons of the ideal. Parents must sometimes, ofttimes, be immovably firm, so firm as to be ready to lose the love of children rather than to sacrifice their self-respect. Men and women are not worthy of the dignity and glory of parenthood who lack the courage to brave the frown of a child, the strength to front a child's displeasure. Remembering that parents usually love their children not wisely but too well and that children love their parents wisely but not too well, let the gentleness of parents be lifted up and hallowed by firmness and the firmness of children be hallowed and glorified by gentleness.

If anything the case is still harder for the uneducated or slightly educated parents of children, who have been enabled to tread the highway of

education. It seems indecent on the part of these to treat parents in contemptuous fashion, sitting at table with them but never exchanging a word of converse. Even when children have virtually attained the heights of omniscience, it is well for them to remember that earth's greatest are not too proud to hold converse with the lowliest, and that one's education is measured not by the number of languages one speaks but by the fineness of spirit that shines through one's speech, however ungrammatical and one's acts however unveneered. Comradeship is not to be bought by parents, neither can it be bribed by children. It must not mean the forfeiture of standards. The comradeship that it not suffered to hold the target ever higher is not comradeship but compromise. The comradeship that dare not press higher standards is not comradeship. The comradeship that fears to urge the ennobling ideal is not comradeship but concession.

I have before me as I write a letter or a fragment of a letter written by a young sergeant of the French army to his parents ere he fared forth in early August, 1914, to Lorraine,—a youth of

promise on the eve of fulfilment. These are his words, unread until after his death in the following month, which he gloriously met, fighting to the end against the overwhelming numbers to which he refused to surrender. "Be sustained by the contemplation of the beautiful which you cannot fail to love, and which brings you to the eternal principle to which our soul returns. . . . It is not they who pass for whom we must mourn. I desire but one thing, that I may have a death worthy of the life of my admirable and truly loved father." No conflict here but perfect concord, the concord of a perfect comradeship. The father a distinguished servant of his country in war and peace, the mother a seeker after God and the highest, had been as his comrades, going just a little before and teaching him how to live and toil and hope. He dared all and fell with peace in his heart and faith in his unconquered soul that all was well, that the comradeship of earth would merge at last in the comradeship eternal.

The Prophet was right: "And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers." For the

Messiah is born when the hearts of parents and children are turned to each other in reverence and selflessness. For then it is that the home is brought nearer to the presence of God and that clashing and conflict end—when, in the word of a noble teacher of our generation, it is remembered that "the child is itself a gift, first to parents out of the infinite, then by them to the eternal."

University of Toronto
Library

DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET

Acme Library Card Pocket
Under Pat "Ref. Index File"
Made by LIBRARY BUREAU

SoF
W8134c

207217

Author Wise, Stephen Samuel

Title Child versus parent.